

## GET THE MOST FROM YOUR VISIT WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Talking with your health care provider about your concerns can make you feel more comfortable. But if you're not feeling well, and time is short, it may be hard to absorb complicated medical information, or think of all the things you want to ask. Here are ways that you can help make it easier for both of you.

### BEFORE THE VISIT: PREPARE

- **Make a list** of your symptoms, questions and concerns, medications you are taking and any family medical history that may be important.
- **Ask a friend** or family member to go with you to take notes, or just for emotional support.

### AT THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER'S OFFICE: ASK

- **Ask your most important questions early in the visit.** Your health care provider will know if they can be answered today or if you will need a follow-up visit.
- **Take notes** of your conversation to help you remember what was said.
- **Tell your health care provider as much as you can** about your physical illness, your thoughts and feelings, and anything that may affect your treatment decisions such as stresses at home or at work.
- **Ask if you don't understand** medical words or want more information. If it will help, ask for a picture or sketch that explains your illness, recommended treatments or tests.
- **REPEAT what you think your health care provider said**, in your own words.
- **TAKE ACTION:** Ask the health care provider for written instructions, if appropriate. Let them know if you will have difficulty following their recommendations.

### WHEN YOU GET HOME: RECORD

- **Keep a record or file folder.** Write down what you have learned, your prescribed medications, your reactions to treatment, future plans for your health, and questions as they occur.

**FEELING OVERWHELMED? Please say so.**

- **Too many questions?** Too much information? Confused about treatment? Feeling rushed to make a decision, or just anxious and emotional? Please let your health care provider know what is making you feel uncomfortable so we can work together to make it better. Never be afraid to ask for a second opinion.

**It helps to talk**

Preparing for your health care provider’s visit

What would you like to know by the end of your visit? List your three most important questions here.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is there anything in particular worrying you about your problem?  
(symptoms, complaints, and feelings)


**CHECKING YOUR UNDERSTANDING:**

- Ask the health care provider to repeat or clarify information that is unclear
- Repeat aloud what they just said
- Summarize your understanding of what they just said

**DON'T FORGET TO:**

- Bring all your medications, or make a list of them and how they are taken
- Ask for a copy of test results