

Questions for AFTER your medical appointment:

It is important to call your doctor if you are unclear about any instructions or have additional questions, such as...

- ❑ Do I need to fill or refill a prescription?
- ❑ Do I need another appointment for tests or lab work? When?
- ❑ Do I need another appointment for a follow-up visit? When?
- ❑ Do I need an appointment to see another type of care provider?
 - ❑ What type of provider?
 - ❑ Who can recommend an appropriate provider and help me make any necessary appointments?
- ❑ Will my insurance cover this?
- ❑ Will I be responsible for scheduling those appointments or will the clinic be doing that for me?

Other times to contact your healthcare team:

If you are experiencing an emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately!

Call your doctor or clinic's nurse line, or send an electronic note through the clinic's messaging site...

- ❑ If you are experiencing any side effects or other problems with your medications that are not life-threatening
- ❑ If your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor, but are not life-threatening
- ❑ If you develop new symptoms after seeing the doctor
- ❑ If you receive any new prescriptions or start taking any over-the-counter medications
- ❑ To get results of any tests you've had. (Do not assume that no news is good news)
- ❑ To ask about test results or next steps that you do not understand

ACTIONS to take BEFORE your appointment:



- ❑ Write down your questions or concerns to bring to your appointment.
- ❑ Put a star next to the most important questions, so you are certain to ask them during your appointment.
- ❑ Make an extra copy of your questions to hand to the physician. This will help you be certain that all your questions are answered. The answers to your questions can help you make better decisions, get good care, and feel better about your health care.
- ❑ Consider making a symptom diary to record any specific symptoms you want to discuss.
- ❑ Bring ALL your medications with you in their original containers, if possible. Include any herbal supplements, vitamins, and home-made preparations you use.
- ❑ Ask someone to go to your appointment with you to help you understand and remember answers to your questions.
- ❑ Bring a tape recorder or video recorder (phone) to record what you are told to do and how to do it.
- ❑ Prepare a personal health history including your current conditions and past surgeries or illnesses. Bring it to your appointment
- ❑ Ask your other CURRENT or past health providers to share your records with your current provider. This will require a signed release form and time for records to be copied and transferred. Your provider's office staff can help you do this.
- ❑ Know your family's health history, such as your parents' health conditions.

Getting More out of Your Healthcare Appointments

QUESTIONS to consider BEFORE you make an appointment:

WHY are you making this appointment?

- ❑ I want to meet the doctor and get introduced to this clinic
- ❑ I need or want to have a preventive care visit
- ❑ I want to talk about a health problem
- ❑ I want to talk about or change my medications
- ❑ I need to talk about or get some medical tests
- ❑ I want to learn about treatment options for my medical concern

Do You Need an INTERPRETER?

- ❑ Do you need to request a medical translator when you make your appointment, if your health care provider is not fluent in your chosen language or you use American Sign Language?

Requesting MEDICAL RECORDS?

- ❑ Do you need to request your medical records from previous providers to be copied and shared with a current provider?
- ❑ Do you know what steps to take to accomplish this?

At the end of your appointment or conversation...

- ❑ Make sure you understand what "the plan" is for your health following the visit
- ❑ Ask questions until you are certain that you understand what you need to do
- ❑ Tell your doctor if you are uncertain about how or why to do anything



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Questions are the Answer: Suggested questions for your healthcare visit

Questions for ROUTINE HEALTH VISITS:

- ☐ What routine healthcare visits do I or my family need?
- ☐ Do I (or anyone in my family) need an annual physical?
- ☐ What immunizations do I or my family need?
- ☐ What is a “Welcome to Medicare” free visit and do I qualify?
- ☐ What is a Medicare wellness visit and do I qualify?
- ☐ What are the differences of camp & sports physicals?
- ☐ What is a well child exam?
- ☐ What types of visits do I need if I am pregnant?

Questions about TREATMENT OPTIONS:

- ☐ What options are available to treat my condition?
- ☐ What are the benefits and limitations of each treatment option?
- ☐ How long will I need to follow this treatment?
- ☐ Will I need to be in a hospital or special care facility? Are there alternative locations for this treatment or procedure? How long will I need to be in this facility?
- ☐ Are there alternative medical treatments available to me (acupuncture, Ayurvedic medicine, etc) along or in conjunction with western medical treatments?
- ☐ May I have written instructions, brochures, videos or websites that may help me learn more?
- ☐ If you show me some procedure that I need to repeat at home, who will demonstrate this and ensure I’m doing it correctly?
- ☐ What happens if I do it incorrectly?
- ☐ Will physical therapy / occupational therapy / other ancillary services improve this condition?
- ☐ Will the use of nutritional therapy and/or probiotics improve this condition?
- ☐ What should I do if I want a second opinion?
- ☐ What happens if I decide not to do anything?

Questions about a HEALTH CONCERN:

- ☐ How will you determine what is causing this problem?
- ☐ Do I need testing?
- ☐ What is my diagnosis and how can I find more information?
- ☐ What are my treatment options?
- ☐ How soon do I need to decide about treatment?
- ☐ What happens if I decide not to have this treatment?
- ☐ Are there any side affects from this treatment?
- ☐ What is the outlook for my future health (prognosis)?
- ☐ Will I need special help at home?
- ☐ Can you recommend ways for to get assistance at home (re: my insurance status, etc)?
- ☐ What if I forget what you are telling me?
- ☐ What should I do if I want a second opinion?

Questions involving MEDICAL TESTING:

- ☐ What is this test for?
- ☐ How is this test done?
- ☐ Do you have any diagrams or videos that will show what happens during this test?
- ☐ How accurate is this test?
- ☐ Is this test the only way to find out this information?
- ☐ What do I need to do to prepare for this test?
- ☐ Will this test make me nauseous or dizzy?
- ☐ Do I need someone to come with me for this test as my driver?
- ☐ How long will this test take?
- ☐ When and how will I get the results from this test?
- ☐ How will I know what the results mean?
- ☐ What is the next step after the test?

Questions involving NEW OR CHANGED MEDICATIONS:

- ☐ What is the name of this medication?
- ☐ What does this medication do?
- ☐ Should I expect any side effects?
- ☐ How long will any side effects last?
- ☐ At what point should I go to the ER, if I have a reaction to the medication?
- ☐ Do I need to avoid any food or drinks while taking this medication?
- ☐ What should I do if I need to use an OTC medication, like headache pills, while I am taking this medication?
- ☐ Will this medicine affect my ability to work / drive / eat / sleep / be exposed to the sun?
- ☐ How much of should I take at one time and when should I take it?
- ☐ What should I do if I miss a dose?
- ☐ What should I do if I take too much of this medication at one time?
- ☐ How long will I be taking this medicine?
- ☐ Do I need to take the entire prescription, if I’m feeling better OR if I have an adverse affect?
- ☐ Can I take a generic version?
- ☐ How should I store this medication?
- ☐ Is there any written information you can give me about this medicine?
- ☐ Do you have videos or diagrams to show me how to use the medication (e.g. use of an inhaler, use of a suppository, etc.)?
- ☐ If this medicine makes me uncomfortable or is too expensive, is there something else you can prescribe?
- ☐ Can you recommend alternatives (e.g. change of diet, exercise, supplements or alternative treatments like acupuncture)?

