

A great appointment starts with you



Patients are used to be led by doctors, but today, taking the lead and being prepared is the key to a good patient-doctor partnership. Although talking about sensitive topics can be hard, the relationship you have with your doctor is one of the most important parts of getting good care. It's easy to make a plan to get the most out of your visit.

Tips on what your plan should include.

- **List of your symptoms.** Write them down as you have them and be specific.
- **List your medications.** Include any prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, herbal remedies, supplements, laxatives, and eye drops.
- **List of habits or life changes** such as the use of any canes, walkers, or scooters.
- **List of other medical visits** like emergency room or urgent care visits, other doctors and specialists.



Use your time wisely.

- **Rank your list of concerns and questions by importance.** Pick out the top three or four concerns you want to cover.
- **Be honest with your doctor.** Tell them the truth. Don't be worried, your doctor is there to help.
- **Remember, your doctor may not be able to answer all of your questions.** If they don't know the answer, ask if another doctor or specialist may be able to answer your question better.

Don't be afraid to ask your doctor questions.

When you don't know the meaning of a word or you can't read your doctor's handwriting, ask them to explain. And don't be afraid to follow up if you have questions after your visit. **You and your doctor need to work as a team to make sure you are getting the care you need. Working together could lead to a faster diagnosis, getting your strength back sooner, and being healthier on your terms.**

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Sources: <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/talkingwithyourdoctor/planningyourdoctorvisit/01.html>
<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/talkingwithyourdoctor/askingquestions/01.html>

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