

+ Tips to Thrive

Preparing for a Medical Appointment

Appointments with your healthcare provider can be overwhelming. You'll usually have a limited time to get answers to your questions. The step-by-step approach below can help you make the most of each appointment and ensure you get the answers you need.

BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

- + Prioritize your concerns and goals for the visit. Depending on the type of visit, you might ask different questions.
- + Organize your questions and concerns in a checklist.
- + Plan transportation to and from your visit.
- + Ask a friend or family member to go with you. They can help take notes on what your healthcare provider says and help advocate for you if questions arise.
- + Ask if any lab work or testing can be done beforehand.
- + Learn the basics of your family's medical history — what health conditions your immediate family members have had.

ITEMS TO TAKE WITH YOU

- + Notebook and pen
- + Insurance card
- + A form of payment
- + A list of your medical information, including:
 - + Current symptoms
 - + Medications (with strength and dose) — making copies of the labels works well if you can
 - + Allergies
 - + Recent surgeries or hospitalizations

AT THE APPOINTMENT

- + Have your insurance card available.
- + Be prepared to pay any necessary copay.
- + Offer your healthcare provider the list of medical information you prepared.
- + Ask the questions on your checklist and take notes on the answers you receive. Communicate in a way that is respectful, but clearly conveys your questions.
- + Be ready to share your family medical history — it might help your provider understand your health condition.
- + Focus on information related to this appointment unless your provider asks you for other details.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE APPOINTMENT

- + Recap everything you've discussed with your healthcare provider.
- + Make sure you understand your care plan and what your healthcare provider wants you to do — including prescriptions, tests, scheduling, and ongoing communication.
- + Review your list and make sure all your concerns were addressed.

AFTER THE APPOINTMENT

- + Share your care plan with a trusted person so they can help you keep track of what you need to do.
- + If needed, give your trusted person limited access to your medical records.

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