

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Your appointment with your health care provider is a valuable opportunity for you to discuss any concerns that you may have about your health. It is a good idea to make a list of the information that you want to discuss.

- Make a note about why you are seeing the provider at this time. Are you checking up on an old problem, or are there new problems that you need to discuss?
- Be prepared to describe your problem. Refer to your notes so that you can give your provider an accurate description of how you are feeling.
- When did your problem begin? Have you ever had anything like it before? List your specific symptoms. If you think that you have had a fever, take your temperature at home. How is your appetite? Do you have pain? How would you describe it? Are you experiencing mental confusion or anxiety?
- Bring all the medications that you take, including any over the counter medicines to your appointment.
- When you are given a new prescription, be sure you know what it is for, when you should take it, and how soon it should begin to work. Ask if there are any side effects that you should know about, and how long you should continue to take it. If it is expensive, will you have difficulty buying it?
- Be sure that you understand why your provider may want you to have special tests scheduled. Ask if you need to prepare in any way for the test, such as by fasting. The provider or his assistant should be able to tell you when you can expect to get the results, and if you will be called or if a letter will be sent.
- If you go to more than one provider for various problems, be sure that each knows what the other is doing. It is especially important for each provider to know all the medications that you are taking.
- Know when you are expected to return for follow-up.
- Your health care provider will carefully consider your questions and will gladly provide the answers. It is important that you understand your providers advice, so feel free to take a few notes during your appointment too. This may make it easier to remember the things that you and your health care provider have agreed that you will do.
- Always bring your insurance card and any referral information to each appointment. It may be needed if you are referred to another provider or if you need to go to the hospital for further evaluation.