

Tips for Talking with Your Health Care Provider

You and your health care providers are working toward the same goal - good health for you. Your doctors, nurses, and other health care providers can talk with you about your health. They can help you with any health problems that you may have. Here are a few tips to make the most of your time together.

Use clinic and hospital visits to learn how to best care for you. Good health depends on you.

Be a partner in decisions about your health care. Talk with your health care providers. Plan your care with them.

When you make an appointment, find out if you need to have any tests before you come in. In some cases, you may have to wait to eat or drink until after a test is done. Ask if you can do the test before your appointment. You may be able to get the results when you meet with your health care provider.

Prepare for your visit. Think about the reason for your clinic visit. Write down what you want to tell your health care provider or any questions you may have. You may want to bring someone with you.

Be clear about your health problem and how you feel. Before your clinic visit, you may want to write down:

- How long you have had your health problem
- What you have done about it
- How your health problem changed or stayed the same
- What makes it better or worse

Tell your health care providers what you have been doing about your health problem. If you have been treating yourself or changed the treatment suggested to you, let your provider know. To best help you, your health care providers need to know how you are caring for you.

Listen carefully to what your provider tells you. If you don't understand, ask questions. Ask your health care provider:

- What your health problem is
- What caused it
- What you should do about your health problem
- When it will improve
- If you need a follow-up visit

Make sure you know and agree with how your health care provider plans to help you.

- Repeat what you have heard to make sure you understand what was said.
- Make sure the instructions are right for you. If they aren't, let your provider know. Your provider may be able to change the plan to better meet your needs.
- Understand side effects and what to expect from any new medicines.
- Find out who to call for any questions you may have after you go home.
- Take your after-visit summary sheet when you are done with a clinic visit. You can also find it in MyChart.

Ask for more information if you need it. If you don't understand something, ask your doctor, nurse, or another provider to explain it. Take notes or ask for a written sheet if this would help you.

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #4377s

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4377.