

What to Do Before Your Health Care Appointment

Find information to help you understand your health condition, symptoms or treatment choices.

Whether you already know what illness or medical condition you have or you only know your symptoms, it helps to gather information before you see your doctor. You can find good resources on the Internet and at your public library.

Prepare a list of question you want to ask during your visit, and bring a copy for your doctor.

Visit the Questions Are the Answer website at <http://www.ahrq.gov/questions> for help crafting your list. Review your final list of questions and take the list with you to your appointment.

Make a list of all the things you want to tell or show your doctor.

The list will vary depending on your health condition and the reasons for your visit.

Example: Write down your symptoms and when they started, or describe your top challenges in managing a chronic disease.

Bring a list of all medications you are currently taking.

Include all prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, herbs, dietary supplements and homeopathic remedies. Your doctors and other health professionals need to know everything you're taking so they can provide safe and appropriate care. Use the Personal Medication Tracker at www.wacommunitycheckup.org/ownyourhealth

Ask a friend or family member to go with you to your appointment.

If you're having serious health problems or feeling concerned, overwhelmed or confused, it can be especially helpful to bring a person you trust. This person can give you emotional support and help you listen carefully, ask good questions and take notes.