



## PREPARE

before I go to my appointment

## COMMUNICATE

during my appointment

## REVIEW

my visit and

## RECORD

my health each day

## How do I talk to my doctor?

Some people don't like going to the doctor, or talking to them. But, it is very important and helps you to stay healthy. Your doctor needs to know about you to keep you feeling well. The doctor will ask you a lot of questions. They will ask how you are feeling and if you have been sick before. They will also ask what you do each day and ask questions about your family. The more questions you can answer, the better the doctor will be able to help.

Here are some tips on how to make talking with your doctor easier.

### Be Prepared

#### *Before going to see the doctor, I should...*

- **Prepare** with the person going to the appointment with me.
  - I need to make sure I know why I am going to the doctor.
  - I should bring copies of notes from other doctors I have seen.
  - I should make a list of all the medicines I am taking.
    - It is important that my doctor knows about my health, especially in recent years.
    - I should also make a list of my medications, and how much I take, so that the doctor knows what other types of medicines might be good or bad for me to take.
      - I can make a list of my medicines (name and dose) or I can bring my bottles, patches, and all other types of medicines with me.
- I should also make a list of questions that I want to ask my doctor. Questions like:
  - Why am I taking this medicine?
  - How does this medicine help me?
  - What other things can I do to be healthy?



### Communicate

#### *During my visit with my doctor, I should...*

- Tell my doctor how I like to **communicate**.
  - I should also tell my doctor if there is anything I might need help doing during the exam.
    - If I need to use an interpreter or assistive communication device.
    - If I need help getting on to the exam table.
    - If there is a certain way that I have trouble sitting or standing, etc.





- I should talk directly to my doctor. If I do not know the answer to a question, I should ask my caregiver for help.
  - I should let my caregiver help me if:
    - I can't remember the name or dose of my medicines
    - I can't remember the name of a surgery I have had in the past
    - I can't remember information about my family
    - I do not know the answer but my caregiver knows
- I should also ask my caregiver to take notes or record the conversation in case I need the information later.
  - It is important that I have all of the information from my appointment. I may need to remember the doctor's instructions for how to take a medicine, or what they said about how to manage on-going health issues (e.g. high blood pressure or diabetes).

## Review and Record

### After I get home, I should...

- **Review** what happened at the appointment with my caregiver, a friend, or family member. It is important to think about my health every day. I should also **record** daily how I feel and keep a journal.
  - I should keep track of my health (record my blood pressure, what foods I ate, when I took my medicines, what exercise I did).
  - I should write about how I feel (am I happy, sad, excited, angry?). The doctor will want to know about all of these things at my next visit.
- I should also write my questions in my journal for the next time I see my doctor.
  - Any question about my health is a good question!
  - I might want to know why I feel a certain way after I take one of my medicines.
  - I might want to know why I need to eat more of some foods and not as much of other foods.



VanZant, S., & Perkins, E. A. (2015). *How do I talk to my doctor?*, Education for Lifelong Health Series, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. [www.flcic.org](http://www.flcic.org).

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### In Summary...

By doing these things, I can feel comfortable talking to my doctor and help them keep me healthy and happy.

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for  
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