

What You Can Do to Prepare For Your Medical Appointment

Before the Appointment

- ❑ Start thinking and writing down thoughts and concerns you may have.
- ❑ *Highlight your concerns* from most important to least important.
- ❑ Set up your questions as a *checklist* so it is easy to cross off as the questions are addressed.
- ❑ *Make a list of all the medications* you take, this includes prescriptions, non-prescription, vitamins, minerals, topical ointments/treatments, pain relievers, herbal remedies, and natural products. If you are taking any dietary supplements, or protein shakes, these are important to list as well.
 - ❑ List the dosage of the medications you take. If you are not sure of the dosage, bring your medications with you to the appointment.
- ❑ *Make a list of your medical history* including other medical conditions, allergies, medication allergies, and relevant family history.
- ❑ *Collect and bring all medical reports*, copies of scans, film CDs, mammogram reports with you.
- ❑ *Create a health binder*, use this to collect and organize your notes, medical reports, and resources you are given.
- ❑ *Bring contact details of your referring doctor* (name, address, telephone number, fax number, or email). Pharmacy contact information is also helpful to bring with you.
- ❑ Are you *covered under an insurance plan* for medications? Let the health team know, it will be taken into consideration when prescribing and suggesting alternatives. This will also allow the team to give you samples and pharmaceutical rebates if they are available, don't be shy to ask for samples.
- ❑ Confirm with the clinic if you can *bring a support person with you to the appointment*. Having two people at the appointment will help in taking notes and remembering points from the discussion.
- ❑ If English is not your first language and there is no one to bring with you to the appointment, ask about *interpreter services*. Plan for this service in advance, as it may take time to book for an interpreter.
- ❑ *Arrive early for the appointment*, waiting 15-20 minutes will help ease the tension.

During the Appointment

- Ask if the health team feels comfortable with you *voice recording* the discussion during the appointment.
- *Bring a note pad and pen* or use your smartphone device to take notes.
- *Don't feel afraid or shy to ask questions*, most doctors appreciate it when you ask questions.
- Ask the health team if they have any publications, handouts, or *recommend resources* online.
- Some medical appointments require you to see another health care professional such as a registered nurse before being seen by the doctor. Take this opportunity to ask questions.
- Clarify with the doctor *what the next steps are?* When is the next appointment? Are there any prescriptions or laboratory blood test orders?
- Be honest and share relevant details about your medical history and concerns without feeling embarrassed or fear of being judged. The details you share will help the doctors help you.