

Medical Appointments: Advocate for you



Managing doctor's appointments can be difficult, especially if you must discuss your personal health concerns. It is crucial to know how to advocate for yourself, whether you are taking care of an illness, getting a second opinion, or just wanting to make sure your issues are taken seriously. With the right tools for planning, communicating, and following up, you may actively participate in your healthcare process and build a cooperative relationship with your medical team. On average the appointment itself can be only 15 minutes, let's talk about how to make the most of it.

Tips for Success

1. Come Prepared
2. Bring someone you trust*
3. Take Notes
4. Breathe
5. Always Ask
6. Be Honest

Before your appointment

To make sure that you receive the finest care possible, it is important that you speak up for yourself in a medical setting. **Being prepared** is key to this process because it will give you the ability to actively participate in your treatment. It's necessary to prepare for your doctor's visit by gathering relevant medical records (if needed), making a list of your symptoms and prescriptions, and any questions or concerns you may have for your doctor. A prepared approach not only eases communication but also helps you feel more informed and confident.

**It is not required to participate in step 2 as who you share your care with is a very personal decision.*

However, if you do feel comfortable with **bringing a trusted person** to your appointment it can be a useful tool. It can be easier for you to speak honestly with your healthcare professional when you have a supporter. A trustworthy individual can also assist you in expressing your worries and questions, especially if you're feeling overwhelmed.

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During your appointment

During a doctor's visit, **taking notes** might be a useful tool. It helps the organization and retention of crucial details provided by your healthcare provider. This can be especially helpful in the hurried environment of a medical office. Additionally, notes can ensure that other medical personnel are able to collaborate about your care. Writing down your ideas can help you organize and make sense of them, which helps to encourage meaningful conversations with your healthcare provider.

It can be overwhelming, don't forget to breathe.

Asking a lot of questions during a medical appointment promotes clarity and understanding. Engaging in conversation helps to ensure that you are informed about your health, allowing you to make informed decisions about your care. You may make sure that all your concerns are considered by asking questions, which can also reveal more information that your healthcare professional may not have addressed. Above all, it fosters a partnership between your healthcare provider and yourself. This active participation can result in more personalized and effective care.

The final tip can mean several things when advocating for yourself, **Be honest**. Honesty must come first when advocating for your care. Withholding information or leaving out facts can result in misinterpretations, incorrect diagnoses, or wrong treatment. Secondly, being honest builds trust between you and your healthcare practitioner. This allows you to talk openly about delicate topics including substance abuse, mental health, and your treatment.

Honesty also means that if you feel uneasy after speaking up, you are allowed to get a second opinion

Ultimately, the ability to speak up for yourself at doctor's appointments is a key as it enables you to take control of your health and wellbeing. You may cultivate a good doctor-patient relationship by being prepared, being upfront with your healthcare provider, and asking the correct questions.

Always keep in mind that you are your own greatest advocate and that your voice matters.