

# PATIENTS AS PARTNERS



Your time as a patient is valuable, and we want to make sure you get the most out of your visit with your doctor.

In order for this to happen, your doctor needs the best possible information from you about your symptoms and concerns. They also need to be sure you understand everything you need to know about your diagnosis and treatment plan.

This tool is meant to help you to prepare for your visit with the doctor, and to be an active partner in your health care management.

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT

### Be prepared to talk to your doctor about:

- » All the symptoms and/or issues you want to discuss with your doctor.
- » How long have you had them and if they go away.
- » Any treatments you've tried to address your symptoms/issues, such as vitamins, herbals, or over-the-counter medications.
- » Any changes you have made since your last appointment, including starting or stopping medications, lifestyle changes, or major life events.
- » If you are here for a routine check-up or follow-up, any new issues or questions that have arisen since your last visit.
- » Consider making notes and bringing them with you.

### Make a list of and/or bring all your medications, vitamins, supplements, and herbals to your appointment.

### Consider inviting someone to come with you if:

- » You need help answering questions and giving your doctor information.
- » You are attending an appointment that may be stressful.
- » You feel anxious and would like some familiar support.

### Inform your doctor of any:

- » Language needs
- » Hearing or sight impairment
- » Allergies you have
- » Other needs

# DURING YOUR VISIT

## Share with your doctor:

- » All the symptoms and issues that concern you.
  - *For example:* “I’m concerned about these headaches I’ve been having.”
- » What you think might be going on.
  - *For example:* “I think my medication is making me dizzy.”
- » Your worries about your symptoms.
  - *For example:* “I’m afraid I might have to quit my job.”
- » How your symptoms are impacting your daily activities.
  - *For example:* “I’m getting winded walking up the stairs.”
- » Any important medical information about you and your family.
  - *For example:* “You should know my mom had lung cancer.”

## Ask questions:

- » If you are unsure why you are being asked to do something (have an exam, have blood taken, etc.)
  - *For example:* “Could you tell me why I need to have my blood tested?”
- » If you aren’t clear about any information the doctor tells you.
  - *For example:* “What do you mean when you say it could be neurological?”
- » If you are not sure if you will be able to follow your doctor’s recommendations.
  - *For example:* “I’m not sure if I’m going to be able to get to the gym every day.”
- » If you want to know if there are other ways to treat your problem.
  - *For example:* “Are there any other options besides surgery?”

## Make sure you know:

- » What the doctor thinks is going on, what you need to do about it, and why it is important.
- » What you need to do next:
  - Repeat in your own words what actions you need to take (go for a test, get a new prescription, etc.).
  - Tell your doctor if you are not sure what a word means, and ask the doctor to explain it.
  - Ask the doctor to write out any instructions for what you need to do when you go home.
  - If you are being referred to another doctor, ask your doctor to write out the name of the doctor, the kind of specialty the doctor is in (surgeon, cancer doctor, heart doctor, etc.) and the reason you are being referred.
- » How to contact our office if you have a question or problem.