



PATIENT SAFETY TIPS

Getting Through the Health Care System

At times, it may seem hard to get through the health care system. To help you, this guide contains some tips and resources.

Drug Safety

- Learn the names of each of your medicines and why you take them.
- Know how and when to take your medicines.
- Make a list of your medicines. Know how many pills you take and when you should take them.
- It is important to know how your medicine helps you.
 - Ask your doctor or pharmacist:
 - What are the chances of side effects from your medicines?
 - What should you do if you miss taking the drug?
 - Should you take your medicine with food?
 - Read the informational insert that comes with your medicine
- Take your medicines the same time, every day.
- Plan ahead for your refills so you do not run out.
- Use a medicine dispenser. This will help remind you of the days and time to take your medicine.
- Never stop taking your medicine without asking your doctor first.

Staying Healthy

- Avoid colds and flu.
 - Wash your hands often.
 - Get plenty of rest.
 - Keep your hands away from your nose and mouth.
 - Eat a well-balanced diet.
 - Do not use the same eating and drinking utensils as others.
 - Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
 - Clean your phone regularly.
- Get your flu vaccination every year.
- Ask your doctor if you require any vaccinations to protect yourself against many different illnesses.
- Stop smoking.
- Exercise regularly.

Tips for a Successful Visit with Your Doctor

- Be clear with office staff of why you need an appointment when you schedule – if you have multiple issues, let the office staff know so they can allow more time for your appointment.
- Prepare for your doctor visit ahead of time.
- Think about questions you would like to ask your doctor. Prepare a list of your symptoms and questions.
- Understand your family history to help your provider best understand your health history.
- Be honest with your doctor instead of saying what you think they want to hear.
- Explain how you are feeling.
- Have a list of medications you are taking or take your medications in to your appointment. Let the doctor know if you have tried any medicines that caused side effects.

- Don't be embarrassed if you have to discuss a personal topic – your doctor has heard it all.
- Keep an open mind about testing and treatment options.
- Medical care should be a conversation. It is reasonable to question your provider if you are not comfortable or do not understand what they are saying to you.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement has a website to help you in how to talk to your doctor here: www.askme3.org

Tips for a Successful Telemedicine Visit

You can prepare for a telemedicine visit using all the tips above, as well as the following:

- Treat a telemedicine visit just like a regular in-person visit.
- Have your medications available to go over with the provider. Tell the provider if you are taking any 'over the counter' medicines.
- Take your vital signs, if possible. Check your temperature, measure your pulse and weigh yourself on the scales.
 - To check your own pulse, place two fingers between the bone and the tendon on the thumb side of your inner wrist. Count the number of beats over 60 seconds. This number is your pulse.
- Set up the technology you will need for the visit prior to your appointment. Test the telemedicine service before your visit.
- Log on early to your visit to make sure the technology is working properly.
- Have your visit in a quiet, well-lit area away from other people. Be sure to turn off the radio and TV.

Know About the Health Care Providers in Your Area

www.medicare.gov/care-compare/

www.leapfroggroup.org