



How to Talk to your Doctor

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Being prepared before your doctor's appointment or before you undergo surgery can help you establish a better relationship with your doctor, maximize your office visit, and potentially improve outcomes and overall satisfaction with your healthcare experience.

How to prepare and make the most of your doctor's office visit

Doctors spend an average of a few minutes with each patient during routine office visits. The length of surgical consultations is longer, but in general, doctors are extremely busy, so you will get the most out of your visit by being prepared.

The following tips may help:

- Before your visit, write down a list of concerns and questions for your doctor.
- Note all of the medications you are currently taking — both prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and supplements.
- Do not schedule a routine visit if you have several ailments — you will need to schedule a longer appointment of at least 30 minutes.
- Do not wait until your pain or health problem reaches an emergency level — it is unrealistic to think that the office will be able to “squeeze” you into their hectic schedule.

Questions to ask your doctor

- Can you please explain what you mean, because I do not fully understand?
- What are the potential side effects of the medication you are prescribing?
- How often should I take this medication?
- What symptoms is the medication supposed to relieve, and when should it take effect?
- What are the risks and benefits of this treatment?

- Why are you ordering these tests, and when should I call for the results?
- Does my family history put me at risk for major diseases, and if so, are there preventative measures I can take?

Questions to ask your surgeon

- What surgery are you recommending?
- Why do I need this surgery?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- What are the benefits of having this surgery?
- What are the risks of having this surgery?
- What will happen if I do not have this surgery?
- Where can I go for a second opinion?
- What is your experience with this procedure?
- How much will the surgery cost?
- Where will the surgery be done?
- What kind of anesthesia will be used?
- How long can I expect to be in the hospital?
- How long will it take for me to recover?
- What if I still have pain or I am still experiencing symptoms after surgery?
- When do I schedule my post-surgery follow-up appointment?
- When can I resume normal activities?