



What to Expect When You Go to the Hospital or Doctor's Office

MU Patient Education Series

Going to the hospital or to a doctor's office can be a frightening, stressful, or even an intimidating experience. Though we all know that doctors are there to help us, the thought of being asked questions, having blood drawn and undergoing surgery can be extremely daunting. Below is a list of tips on how you can be both mentally and physically prepared for any type of health-related visit.

Log your symptoms

- This will be helpful for both you and your doctor. Sometimes in stressful situations it may be hard to remember everything, so this will ensure that your doctor is aware of everything you have been experiencing. Also, this list will be helpful during treatment to compare your condition.

Make a list of allergies and be sure to tell your doctor

- It is possible that your doctor will prescribe you with a medication you are allergic to, so it is crucial that you warn them of all allergies.

Make a list of medications you are taking or bring them with you

- Some medicines do not mix well together.

Do not be afraid to ask questions; write them down to help you remember

- The doctors are there to help you. You have gone for help and to get answers, you might as well ask questions!
- Remember that you can make sure that you get the best possible care by being an active member of your health team.
- Being involved in your care means being prepared and asking questions.



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Write down questions you want to ask your physician. Some questions that may be helpful are:

- Do I need a blood test or an x-ray?
- What else can I do to stay healthy?
- Is this common?
- Any restrictions I should follow/know about?
- What are my treatment options?
- Is there a generic option for my prescription medication?
- Are there any side effects from the medication?
- How much will this treatment/medication cost?
- Is there any further research that I could do?
- Is there a specialist I can or should see?
- Should I continue going to work?
- Will I need any help at home?
- Could this condition lead to another?
- Ask about insurance and payment.
- What is my diagnosis?

Record all family medical history

- Some conditions are passed down genetically, so knowing your family medical history can be very important in diagnosis.

Record your own medical history

- This may be helpful in diagnosis as well.
- Include your current conditions/symptoms and past surgeries and illnesses.

Bring a family member or friend

- Doctor visits can be stressful, and time is usually limited for each appointment. It is always helpful to have mental support. Your guest may also help tell the doctor anything you forgot to mention or to help you remember the answers to your questions.

Check if you need prescription refills

- It is very convenient to fill any prescriptions while you are at the office, if possible.



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Be honest and answer questions fully and honestly with your doctor—do not be annoyed or overwhelmed if you are asked the same question more than once, the doctors and nurses are just trying to help.

Some questions they may ask

- Can you tell me about your family history?
- When did your symptoms start?
- What was the trigger symptom that caused you to make the appointment?
- Are your symptoms persistent or occasional?
- How severe do your symptoms get?
- Do you smoke?
- What is your diet like?
- Are you sleeping, eating and using the bathroom regularly?
- Do you exercise?

If you are admitted into the hospital, you will receive a hospital wrist band

- This will serve as identification.
- Make sure that the clinician verifies your identity with the wrist band before initiating any medical treatment.

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