

KNOW YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Most people are more satisfied with their health care if they share the responsibility with their health care provider. Your health care provider is an expert on medical care, but you are the expert on YOU. Only you can discuss your concerns and the concerns you may have because your father had a heart attack at age 48 and your grandmother's history of diabetes. You need to inform your health care provider about your blood pressure readings, glucose results and other test and screening results. You also need to discuss any signs or symptoms that may concern you. By being a partner with your health care provider, you can ensure that you get the preventive care you need.

Here are some tips for being a good partner and sharing in the decision making with your health care provider.

- **Build a relationship with your health care provider.** Let your health care provider know that you want to be a partner in your health care and discuss your expectations. Make the most of the time you have with your health care provider, be prepared to discuss your concerns, feelings and questions on your health.
- **Be an active participant in each appointment.** Listen carefully to what your health care provider says. If you do not understand a diagnosis or treatment, ask questions. Address concerns you have about carrying out the prescribed treatment. Speak up if you feel that your health care provider is not showing respect or spending enough time with you. It may be hard to bring up concerns like these, therefore begin by telling your health care provider that you have questions and concerns and ask for extra time to talk.
- **Make a list of questions for your health care provider.** Be efficient when you meet with your health care provider. Have you ever left the health care provider's office and thought of a dozen questions you meant to ask? Compile a list of your questions and concerns prior to your visit. Learn to feel comfortable asking questions during your appointment. After all, you are there for YOU.
- **Give complete and accurate information.** Prior to the appointment, prepare a list of your current medications (including vitamins and supplements), previous surgeries and hospital admissions to provide correct and complete information. Take an active role in your health care decisions, and make the most of your limited appointment time.



- **Ask all of your questions and make sure you understand the answers before you leave the office.** Review your list of questions to make sure that you don't forget anything. Jot-down notes during the appointment. You might want to bring someone with you to help ask questions, listen and remember. Let the health care provider know if you are confused or do not understand what he or she tells you.

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