

# Take Charge: Tips for Navigating Your Medical Journey



Talking to a doctor can be scary, especially if you have to share personal information. It can be hard to speak up for yourself but having an open and honest conversation will help doctors understand how to help you better.

## Preparing for the Appointment

1. Write down the symptoms you are feeling and any concerns you may have.
2. Have a list of questions you want your doctor to answer.
3. Take note of your medical history and mention any medication that you are currently on.
4. Write down your goals for the appointment and your overall health goals. This will help the doctor give you better advice to reach your goals.

## Potential Questions to Ask During Your Appointment:

- Do you help a lot of patients with the pain or condition I have?
- What are my treatment options? Can you tell me the benefits or side effects of each?
- What medications will help? What side effects do they have?
- Will any of my other prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, or supplements interact with the recommended treatment?
- What lifestyle changes can I make to support my treatment or medication?
- Will other health specialists be consulted?
- What are the next steps if the recommended treatment does not work?

## During the Appointment

If you are worried or anxious about your appointment, bring a loved one like a family member, partner, or friend. They can be a second set of ears and ask questions you have not thought of.

Take notes on your phone or in a notebook while talking to your doctor. Write down treatment options, medication recommendations, and next steps after the appointment. If you are seeing multiple healthcare professionals, keeping notes can be helpful for everyone. At the end of the appointment, review your notes and confirm the next steps.

## Still Feeling Unheard?

If you still feel unheard or your concerns are not taken seriously after seeing your doctor, it may be best to get a second opinion from another provider. Some doctors and patients may not be the best fit for your health concerns. Make sure the doctor you are seeing listens to your concerns and questions. If they do not make time for your thoughts and opinions, you may want to find a new doctor.



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