

# Why this matters:



Health literacy is a huge problem in today's healthcare. Everyday, there are patients who aren't fully understanding everything doctors are doing/talking about. This can lead to medication misuse and mistakes, consent without knowing what you are consenting to, and incomplete autonomy when it comes to making decisions about your healthcare.

Everybody deserves to be in total control of their healthcare, even when it's hard to understand. Throughout this pamphlet are some key ways to take control of YOUR healthcare.

## What can I do to make a change?

Be open to learning, not-knowing, and curious about what's going on. Everything can be explained in more simple terms. While medical talk is intimidating, everyone who knows the language at one point didn't. It's important to know you are not a burden, and the explanation and time it takes to answer your questions is what you DESERVE, it's not asking too much.

Below is a consolidated list of these concepts for easy use at your next doctors visit!

## Before the visit:

- Review the reason for the doctors appointment and determine what you want to get out of it
- Make your list of questions
- Collect ALL of your medications and either write down/bring them to your doctors visit
- Determine the need for a family member/friend, and ask them to join!

## During the visit:

- Tell your doctor your goals for the appointment, and make it clear your expectations
- Ask your questions!
- Go through your medications, and ensure understanding with each one
- Take notes/ask for a handout of all the information given at the appointment

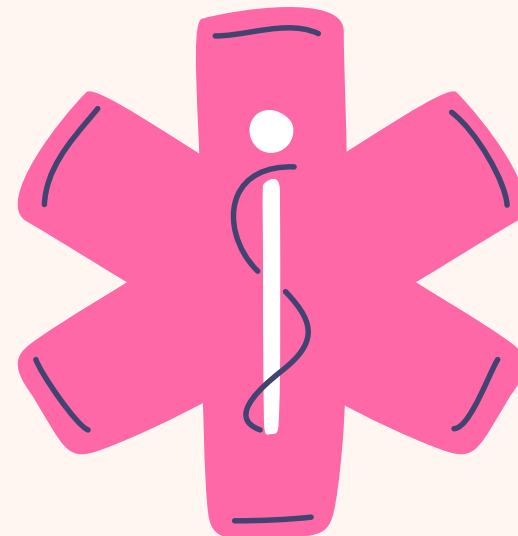
## After the visit:

- Go through your questions and ensure they were all answered
- Reread the information from the visit and determine what needs clarity
- From a credible source, look up any information you aren't sure of OR
- Call the doctor back and clarify any needed information/questions that remain unanswered

**Now, implement new treatments/lifestyle modifications and feel confident in knowing YOU took control of YOUR healthcare!**

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

6 tips so YOU don't fall victim to not understanding YOUR healthcare



# #1: Prioritize YOUR questions

## Before the doctor:

Take the time to think of what YOU want to ask. This can be about your current medications, your health conditions, or about your lifestyle choices. Take the time to think about what you want to get out of the doctor's appointment.

## At the doctor:

Make sure that you have time to get your questions answered. Speak up and tell the doctor you have a list of questions, and go through each of them with your doctor.



# #2: Know your medications

It's very common to be taking multiple medications for many different medical reasons. Additionally, the more medications you take, the higher the chance of interactions. When preparing for your doctor visit, take the time to write out what medications you are taking, especially if you have multiple different physicians. Make sure to include prescriptions, over the counters, and supplements. Then, go over the medications with your doctor. If you are having

problems with one of them, this is a perfect time to bring that up.

**Make sure before you leave you understand 4 things:**

- The drug name
- Reason you take it
- Dose/how many tablets
- How often you take it.



## What to ask when you have no clue what to ask:



- Why am I taking this medication?
- What side effects might this medication cause?
- How will this procedure effect me afterwards?
- Is this surgery necessary?
- What lifestyle modifications could I make to help this issue?
- Where is a reputable source to learn more about my condition?
- What preventative screenings/vaccines should I be receiving?

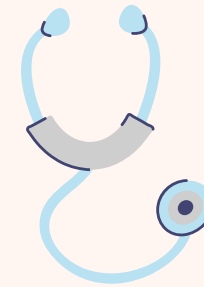
# #3: Ask "What do you mean?"

If a doctor says something you don't understand, interrupt or ask at the end to have them explain further. They are there with a purpose of serving YOU, and you have the right to an explanation.

# #4: Bring a family member or friend

The doctor's office can be very overwhelming, especially when being told not so great news. With shocking news, it's hard to listen to everything the doctor has to say and quite often our brain turns off automatically. Bringing someone along to serve as an extra set of ears and another voice can help in difficult situations, and can make sure someone is there to understand the full story whenever you might not be able to at that moment.

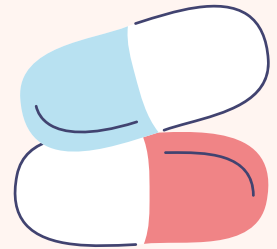
# #5: Take Notes



The doctor can provide a lot of dense information at one time, which is very easy to forget. However, this information could be essential to know. To ensure you don't forget what they say, take some notes during the encounter or ask for a handout of all the information they said. That way, you have the information to refer back to when you go, "what did the doctor say again?"

# #6: Ask for the Big Picture/What's most important

Again, the doctor can provide a lot of information that can get very overwhelming. Sometimes you might not even be sure as to what exactly you should be doing, simply by asking the question



**"What should I do when I walk away from this appointment?"**

gives both you and the doctor a moment to slow down, and clarify YOUR exact next steps. This is key in your understanding as to how you can positively impact your own healthcare.

