

How to get the **Most** from your Doctor Appointments

Going to see the doctor is often a stressful event for seniors and their families. There are many ways you can prepare yourself that will allow you to get the most out of your appointment and limit the associated stress.

If you do not feel you are receiving the best possible care, you are consistently made to wait extended periods of time or you feel rushed during your appointment we strongly suggest you look for a new doctor. It is generally best for seniors to see a geriatric specialist.

Here are some helpful tips:

1. Write down all of your questions and concerns before your appointment. Include all of your aches and pains as well as concerns about any decreased abilities you have in performing your activities of daily living.
2. Make sure to wear your glasses and/or hearing aid during your appointment.
3. Bring a list of all medications you are taking including medicine name, dosage and frequency. Also, write down all vitamins and over the counter medicines you are using.
4. Poly pharmacy, (taking multiple different prescription medicines) is a big problem with seniors. It isn't a bad idea to ask your doctor if there are any medications you are currently taking that you can discontinue or reduce.
5. If your doctor prescribes a new medicine please be sure to ask the doctor
 - What the medicine is for
 - What time of day should you take the medicine
 - Should you take the medicine with food
 - Are there any other special instructions to follow with the new medicine
 - What the possible side effects of the medicine are and if there are any side effect that you should report to your doctor
 - How long you should take the new medicine, (is there an end date or do you continue taking it on an ongoing basis
 - Is the new medicine available in generic or is there a similar medicine available that does have a generic
 - Are there any samples of the new medicine your doctor can give to you
6. Be sure to let your doctor know if you are using any alternative medicines or therapies.
7. If your physical abilities have decreased ask if therapy, (physical, occupational or speech), is indicated. Medicare does pay for therapy with doctors orders.
8. Be sure to ask questions if you do not understand any instruction your doctor is giving. It is helpful to have the doctor or their nurse write down all instructions for your reference.