

# Patient Prep/Appt Management

## **Know yourself**

Self-advocacy is the key to you managing your own health care and healthcare options. You know yourself the best, so you are the best person for this job! The MOST important step is learning everything about yourself that you can possibly learn:

Have you been diagnosed with a condition?

If so, what is that condition/illness?

If not, are you feeling symptoms?

If so, what are they? (if you have been diagnosed, list your symptoms as well)

What foods do you like?

What are your pet peeves?

What situations, foods, and environments exacerbate your symptoms?

What are your strengths?

What activities make you feel good?

Do you have hobbies?

What challenges you?

How does it challenge you?

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## Part II - Conversations with your Health care Provider

Speaking up for ourselves can be one of the toughest things to do. It can be scary, intimidating, and downright uncomfortable. But, you can do this! You are powerful and no one can convey your life the way that you can -- you are the expert and you've got this!

1. Prepare for your appointments -
  - a. Determine whether or not you will have someone attending your appointment with you. You will want to discuss your concerns with them so that they can be prepared for the appointment with you.
  - b. Create a list of questions that you would like answered by your health care professional. Example questions:
    - i. Have you treated other black/minority patients?
    - ii. Why do you want to run that test? How long do the results take?
    - iii. What will the results tell you about my health?
    - iv. Will there be additional tests?
    - v. What patient resources are available to me?
  - c. Research your condition/symptoms - make a list of symptoms
    - i. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the least amount) - how much pain are you in?
    - ii. How does each symptom impact the quality of your life? Make a list.
  - d. Make a list of medications that you are currently taking
    - i. Make a list of medications that you have recently taken (the last 60 days)
  - e. Bring any x-rays, test results, lab results that pertain to the appointment with you (if this is a new physician).
2. During your appointment:
  - a. Listen and take notes on what the doctor says, and write down the questions that you think of so that you don't forget them.
  - b. Go over your questions and ask them (write your notes on the responses, and process what is said).
  - c. Express your needs, don't assume that the doctor will know them.
  - d. As much as your health is an emotional situation, do your best to remove emotions from your self-advocacy so that you can think clearly and rationally.
  - e. Ask questions about the medication that you are being prescribed:
    - i. Why am I being prescribed this medication?
      1. I have an allergy to \_\_\_\_\_, does this medication have that?
      2. Are there other options or is this the only option right now?
    - ii. How long has it been on the market?
    - iii. Are there any studies that I can read on this particular medication?
    - iv. What if I miss a dose? Will there be adverse effects?
    - v. If this fails, what are the next steps?
    - vi. Are there any natural remedies that may help instead of immediately going to a prescription medication?
3. If you are not comfortable with the diagnosis, you have the right to seek a second opinion. Express this concern to your healthcare provider and look into a secondary opinion.
4. Prepare to receive news that you may not be comfortable with
  - a. You can disagree, this is a process. But respect is always the rule.
5. When speaking to office personnel, be sure that you are speaking to the person who is qualified to answer your questions with an accurate response. Meaning, if they tell you NO, do they have the authority to provide a YES also. If they do not, it is OK to ask for the director or the manager.

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## Part III - Patients Rights

Know your rights and responsibilities as a Patient.

1. The patient has the right to receive considerate and respectful care.
2. The patient has the right to know the name of the physician responsible for coordinating his or her care.
3. The patient has the right to obtain information from his or her physician in terms that can be reasonably understood. Information may include but is not limited to his or her diagnosis, treatment, prognosis and medically significant alternatives for care or treatment that may be available. When it is not medically advisable to share specific information with the patient, the information should be made available to an appropriate person on his or her behalf. When medical alternatives are to be incorporated into the plan of care, the patient has the right to know the name of the person(s) responsible for the procedures and treatments.
4. The patient has the right to obtain the necessary information from his or her physician to give informed consent before the start of any procedure and treatment. Necessary information includes but is not limited to the specific procedure and treatment, the probable duration of incapacitation, the medically significant risks involved and provisions for emergency care.
5. The patient has the right to refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of his or her action.
6. The patient has the right to obtain information about any professional relationships that exist among individuals who are involved in his or her procedure or treatment.
7. The patient has the right to every consideration for privacy throughout his or her medical care experience, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Confidentiality and discreet conduct during case discussions
  - b. Consultations
  - c. Examinations
  - d. Treatments
8. Those not directly involved in his or her care must have the permission of the patient to be present. All communications and records pertaining to the patient's care will be treated as confidential.
9. The patient has the right to access and examine an explanation of his or her bill regardless of the source of payment.
10. The patient and designated support person(s) have the right to know what facility rules and regulations apply to their conduct as a patient and guest during all phases of treatment.

It is the patient's responsibility to participate fully in decisions involving his or her own healthcare and to accept the consequences of these decisions if complications occur.