

## Getting the most from a visit to your doctor

### Before the visit

1. Make a list of your symptoms, questions, concerns, medications or supplements you are taking, and any family medical history that may be important.
2. Ask a friend or family member to go with you to take notes or for emotional support.
3. When booking your appointment, ask for extra time if the visit will be complex or if you have multiple medications you need to discuss or have checked.

### At the visit

1. Ask your most important questions early in the visit; make a follow-up visit if necessary.
2. Take notes of the conversation.
3. Tell your doctor as much as you can about your physical symptoms, your thoughts and feelings, any stresses at home or work.
4. Ask if you don't understand something that is being told to you. If it will help, ask for a picture or sketch that will explain your illness, recommended treatment or test.
5. Repeat what you think your doctor has said, in your own words. Ask for written instructions.
6. Learn some basic medical terms if you don't already know them. Ask the doctor for a booklet with a glossary.
7. If you are being prescribed a medication, ask about known side effects, the likelihood that it will work for you, and what the consequences would be of not taking it. Ask as well if cheaper versions are available.

### After the visit

1. Keep a journal of any changes since the visit.
2. Note any reactions to medications and report these if they continue.