

5 Ways to Make the Most of Your Doctor's Appointment

You thought you were prepared. You had several questions ready to ask your doctor during your well-check visit — but when the time came, you couldn't think of a single one.

If this happens to you, you are not alone. Don't fret, though. There are several things you can do to make your visit more effective and get the most out of one-on-one time with your doctor. If you use the tips below, you'll be prepared and at ease — and your doctor will appreciate that you've done your homework.



1. Be punctual

Arrive 15–20 minutes early for your appointment. Doing so will give you plenty of time to check in and have your vitals (height, weight, blood pressure) taken before your appointment time. It also will help you get as much time with your doctor as possible.



2. Write your questions down

Before your appointment, write down any questions or concerns you want to talk about. These are too easy to forget if you try to rely on memory alone. Writing them down also helps you prioritize your questions so you'll know what to ask first. Also, bring a list of all of your current medications, including herbs and dietary supplements — those count as medications.



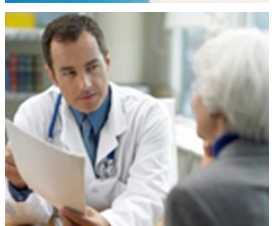
3. Share your family health history

Be sure your family health history is up-to-date. Share any changes or new conditions of your family members with your doctor. Your family history is a very important tool for predicting your risk for disease.



4. Relax

It's natural to be nervous or anxious when visiting a doctor, but remember that we are here to help you. Try to relax as much as possible. Some patients even suffer from white-coat hypertension, which means their blood pressure rises higher than normal when they are in the doctor's office. When you arrive, take a few deep breaths and remember that your doctor is on your get-well and stay-well team.



5. Be honest

Let's be honest — many medical conditions are uncomfortable to discuss. But you should not be embarrassed to talk about *anything* with your doctor. Actually, leaving out details or lying to your doctor can be bad for your health because it affects your care, so tell your doctor everything. Honesty is definitely the best policy — especially for your health.