



## **How to talk to your doctor**

Going to the doctor can be overwhelming. You might worry about what's wrong with you. You might feel annoyed because you have to wait longer than expected. The wait can make you nervous, anxious, or even scared. When you finally get to see the doctor or nurse, the visit seems to be short. You might only have few minutes to explain your symptoms, and ask the questions you have been meaning to ask about your health, medication, and/or any concerns you might have. Talking to doctor/nurse/midwife is a skill that one must acquire. Knowing how and what to ask your health care team will help you get the information you need.

### ***Tips on how to talk to your doctor***

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- 1. Give your doctor a list of medication.** List your questions and concerns: Write it down before the appointment. This helps you remember the concerns you had
  
- 2. Describe your symptoms.** Use adjectives to describe your symptoms rather than long confusing sentences. If you know, say what sets them off or triggers them.
  
- 3. Be honest about your daily habits.** There is no need to be embarrassed. Sharing the right information helps doctors/nurses to diagnose the problem. Not sharing information can be harmful as it may interfere with the treatment plan. Discuss even the sensitive issues. Your doctor or nurse has probably heard it before.
  
- 4. Ask questions about any tests and your test results.**
  - a) What do I need to do to get ready for the tests?
  - b) When will I get the results?
  - c) Will it be mailed or do I need to come pick it up?
  - d) Are there any side effects associated with the test? Or the medication?



*Ask question about your condition or illness if diagnosed with a condition,*

- a) Ask your doctor where can you get more information about the illness?
- b) What caused the condition?
- c) What are the risk factors that exacerbate the condition?
- d) Is the condition permanent?
- e) What can you do to help yourself feel better?
- f) How can it be treated?
- g) What are your options?
- h) Ask your doctor to explain all the available options for your condition.

**5. Tell your doctor or nurse if you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant.** Even if you have the slightest chance of being pregnant, discuss that with your doctor. Some medicines may not be suitable for you. There are medicines that pregnant women or soon to be pregnant women should avoid.

**6. Ask your doctor about any medication prescribed.**

- a) Understand when and how to take it. And for how long.
- b) How many refills do you get?
- c) What should you do if you miss a dose?
- d) Are there any foods, drugs, or activities you should avoid when taking the medicine?
- e) Is there a generic brand of the drug you can use?
- f) You can also ask your pharmacist if a generic drug is available for your medication.

**7. Ask about office hours and weekend schedules, if that works best for you.**

**8. Ask more questions if you don't understand something.** If you're not clear about what your doctor or nurse is asking you to do or why, ask to have it explained again.