

THE PROACTIVE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Striving to educate our members to be more ProActive towards a healthier lifestyle.



TALKING TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS:

Taking an Active Role in Your Care

In order to get the best medical care, your providers need to know a lot about you, your family, and your lifestyle. That means you and your providers share a very personal relationship! Speaking up to share your concerns and questions is important. Clear and honest communication between you and your providers can help you both make smart choices about your health.

Let's explore the ways in which you can take an active role in your care.

1 Begin with Preparation

Before your appointment, make a list of any concerns and questions you have. Bring this list to your appointment. This will help you remember everything you want to discuss.

Do you have a new symptom? Have you noticed side effects from taking your medications? Do you want to know the meaning of a certain word? Don't wait for your provider to bring up a certain topic, because they may not know what's important to you. Speak up with your concerns.

Even if the topic seems sensitive or embarrassing, it's best to be honest and upfront with your provider. You may feel uncomfortable talking about sexual problems, memory loss, or bowel issues, but these are all important to your health. It's better to be thorough and share a lot of information than to be quiet or shy about what you're thinking or feeling. Remember, your doctor is used to talking about all kinds of personal matters.

2 Bring a Friend

Consider having a family member or close friend join you for your appointment. Your companion can help if there are language or cultural differences between you and your doctor. If you feel unsure about a topic, the other person can help you describe your feelings or ask questions on your behalf. It also helps to have someone else's perspective. Your friend may think of questions or raise concerns that you hadn't considered.

3 Take Advantage of Technology

Many providers now use electronic health records. Ask for instructions on how to access your records, so you can keep track of test results, diagnoses, treatment plans, and medicines. These records can also help you prepare for your next appointment.



4 Don't Wait

After your appointment, if you're uncertain about any instructions or have other questions, call or email your provider right away. Don't wait until your next visit to make sure you understand your diagnosis, treatment plan, or anything else that might affect your health.

Your body is complicated and there's a lot to consider. It is up to you to do everything you can to get the most out of your health care.

QUICK TIPS

- Write down a list of questions and concerns *before* your visit with your provider.
- Be upfront. Tell your provider how you feel, including things that may seem unimportant or even embarrassing.
- Bring a family member or close friend with you.
- If you don't understand something, ask questions until you do.
- Take notes or ask your companion to take notes for you.
- Ask about a member portal and the best way to contact the provider (by phone, email, etc.).
- Remember that other members of your health care team, such as pharmacists, can be good sources of information.



Source: [newsinhealth.nih.gov](https://www.newshealth.nih.gov)