Make the Most of Your Appointments with Health Care Professionals

*Updated March 2019*

- **Be prepared**
  - Write a list of your questions, such as:
    - What screening tests do I need? (Such as: cholesterol screening, blood pressure check, mammogram, thyroid testing, prostate exam, etc.)
    - How’s my weight? Your doctor can tell you how your weight can affect your health and risk of disease. If you need to shed some pounds, he/she can suggest healthy ways to do so.
    - What should, and shouldn’t, I be eating? If you struggle with your weight, blood pressure, cholesterol or another condition that can be managed through lifestyle changes, ask your HCP what you should or could be doing.
    - If you use tobacco and would like to quit, ask for advice.
    - If you are feeling anxious or very sad, tell your HCP and discuss options to make you feel better and to get the support you need.
    - If you are concerned/or if someone else has expressed concern about your alcohol intake, ask your HCP for guidance.
    - Keep a list of your medications including over-the-counter and herbal drugs
      - Your HCP will ask you for the names, dosages, and when you take these medications.
      - Consider bringing a family member or trusted friend with you they can help you remember questions and your provider’s responses and advice.

- **Be on time**
  - If possible, arrive 15 minutes early to complete paperwork, etc.

- **Be honest**
  - Your HCP needs information in order to help you to have a healthy life - information about your medical issues (past and present) and your family’s medical history.

- **Relax**
  - If you are nervous, take a few deep breaths. Remember your HCP wants to help you to be healthy and feel well.

- **Expect to have about 15 to 20 minutes with your HCP** – if you think that you may need more time, let the office staff know when you make the appointment.
  - Be prepared to tell the HCP how you have been since you last saw them and to describe any new symptoms.
  - Ask questions about treatments or medications that the HCP may prescribe such as:
    - What is this medication/treatment for?
    - Will this medication interact with my other medications?
    - What are side effects of medication or treatment that I should report?