



20

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

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NAVIGATING YOUR HEALTHCARE JOURNEY

Welcome



Navigating the healthcare system in the United States can be one of the most difficult and complicated journeys you can take. It can be confusing and daunting for the savviest individual, even for those with a medical background.

When you're faced with a chronic health problem, an acute event, or the prospect of a life-threatening condition, it's natural to feel scared, vulnerable, and overwhelmed. Given the complexity and fragmentation of the medical environment, it can be challenging to find the right resources and support.

Our hope is these 20 Questions to Ask Your Doctor will help you become empowered with greater knowledge and the confidence to act as a strong advocate for yourself and your loved ones.

20 Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Initial Visit | Follow-Up Visits

1. Do you have my entire medical history, including allergies? Is there anything that you want to know more about?
2. Do you have an updated list of all my medications, including over-the-counter medicine and vitamin supplements, with the dosages for each? Do I need to keep taking all these medications and at the same amount? Can I cut back or eliminate any of them? What are the long-term effects, if any?
3. What do you think might be causing my current problem? Do you think that a previous condition or procedure may be contributing to the symptoms I'm experiencing now?
4. Do my symptoms sound like they could be related to long Covid? An autoimmune condition? Menopause? [Functional Neurological Disorder \(FND\)?](#)

5. How do I reach you after hours or in an emergency?
What # do I call? How quickly can I expect a call back?
6. What else do you need to know about me in order to provide the best possible care?

Diagnostic (e.g., procedures, labs, radiology).

1. What diagnostic procedures or lab tests are needed to make an accurate diagnosis? What do I need to know before or after the testing (e.g., Do I need to fast? Will I be able to drive myself?)
2. Are there any side effects or risks involved? If I need a CT scan, for example, is it ok for me to have contrast dye? If so, what do I need to do to reduce any potential negative impact on my kidneys? Do I need to be premedicated to avoid an allergic reaction? Do I need non-iodinated contrast?
3. How soon will I get the results of the testing? Will they be available on the portal? How soon can I expect to review the results with you?
4. Do I have to have the procedure in the hospital, or can it be done in a surgical center or an ambulatory center that is standalone and does not involve a hospital facility fee?

Treatment

1. What are ALL my treatment options? What are the implications of each? What would you recommend if it were you or a family member?
2. Can you provide any literature about my condition? Can you suggest any online information from a trustworthy source?
3. If I want to get a second opinion, can you suggest another physician to see?
4. Are there any clinical trials available? How do I find out about them?
5. How quickly do I have to make a decision? What if I decide to do nothing right now and just wait? What are the implications?
6. How much will the treatment cost and will my insurance cover it?*
7. How long is the recovery period and what does it entail? How soon will I be able to drive, go back to work, and resume my normal activities? What restrictions will I have?

8. Will there be post-operative pain, and how will it be managed?
9. Are there any resources I need while I am recuperating, e.g., physical therapy, support group, etc.
10. If there's a prescription for medication, how will I need to adjust it if, for example, the potential side effects go away within a few days? Will the medication work well regardless of my sex or race? After discharge from a hospital stay, do I need to be on the same medications that I was on before, and at the same dosage and frequency?

* Don't be surprised if your doctor/doctor's office does not know the cost of services, unless they themselves are providing them. It's also crucial to be aware that just because your healthcare provider has ordered something, does not mean it will be covered.

If you have insurance, it's important to check directly with your insurance company to make sure there have not been any changes in your policy and to determine if the service is covered, particularly if it is an expensive one. Document the date, time, person's name, and employee number in case there is any question in the future that you confirmed coverage.

About Us



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Charlene Rothkopf

Executive coach, management consultant, human resource executive, patient and family advisory council co-chair, and patient

Our experiences—as a patient with an extended and complicated illness and as a physician who has tried to approach patients with empathy and compassion—motivated us to write a book.

[Navigating Your Healthcare Journey](#) provides guidance, insights, and practical tips to help you get the care you need and deserve. We hope the messages from those who have shared their stories, along with the lessons learned from our own experiences and expertise, will serve as a guiding light on your health and well-being journey, wherever it may lead.

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