

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

To make the most of your time with a medical specialist, it is important to plan and be prepared for the appointment. Asking questions about your diagnosis, treatment plan, medications etc. can improve the quality and effectiveness of healthcare you receive.

1. Think about your goal for the appointment:

Do you want to discuss a health issue? Do you want to change a medication? Do you want to learn about alternative treatment options? Do you want to learn more about a test or a test result?

Prioritize your concerns and make a list of questions for the doctor. Leave space between the questions for you to jot down the doctor's response.

2. Questions you might want to ask about a test:

What will this test accomplish? Is it a reliable test? What are the possible complications?

3. Questions you might want to ask about a treatment plan:

What other options do I have? (consider factors like financial implications, time off from work, side effects, complications, recuperation time)

Is this the least invasive treatment option? (consider medications versus surgery with all the pros and cons of each)

Is it compatible with my age and lifestyle? (will you need help performing activities of daily living, will you continue to be able to pursue your favourite sport or hobby)

4. Questions you might want to ask about a medication:

What does this medication do? Will it effect my concentration or make me drowsy? What are the possible side effects? Will this medication interact with my other medications? Are there any red flags I should watch out for?

Apart from preparing your questions for your doctor, bring an up to date list of your medications with you to the appointment. If you don't have a list, just carry all your medications with you to the appointment, and don't forget to include any health supplements, vitamins or alternative medicine that you might be taking.

Most of all, consider bringing a trusted friend or family member to the visit. An extra set of eyes and ears could prove to be very helpful!