

AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

It is a good idea to go to a medical appointment prepared, with a plan. It is even better when you have a follow-up plan for after your appointment. Now that you have seen your doctor, discussed your concerns and received instructions and information, it is important you follow them. Here's a guide on how to organize yourself after a medical appointment.

When to call your Doctor's office, or schedule a follow-up appointment:

- when you are unsure about your medication routine
- if you experience any unwanted and undesirable side effects from any of your medications
- if your health deteriorates after the appointment
- if you notice significant changes in your symptoms (intensity, time, appearance etc.)
- to ask about test results. Unless you have been told so, no news is not always good news.
- to make an appointment to discuss test results that you don't understand, or need further clarification about.

If you decide to start taking over-the-counter medications, ask your pharmacist if it could possibly interact with your prescription medications.

If you have been diagnosed with a chronic disease like hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, hypothyroidism or heart disease, I would highly recommend you make a medical binder for yourself. This binder should contain all your medical history, test reports and relevant information in it.

If you have been asked to get a test, try to book an appointment for it as soon as possible.

If you have been scheduled for surgery, find out if you need to avoid certain activities or have been advised to make changes to your diet and medication regimen. Follow those instructions.

If you have been given a prescription, try to go to the pharmacy as soon as possible and get the required medications. You can also ask the pharmacist to further explain how you need to take the medication.

Most pharmacists are happy to provide you with free pill packs. These pill packs are made by the pharmacy. They sort out your medications according to the day and time you are supposed to take them, and label them accordingly. This saves you the time and hassle of trying to organize your medications yourself.

If you have been asked to book a follow-up appointment or test, try to book the appointments as soon as possible. Then mark them on multiple calendars, so you don't end up missing the appointment.

Tell a trusted friend or family member about your medical issues and appointments. This not only helps ease the psychological and emotional effects of your medical condition, but also helps to keep you on track, with your medication routine and appointments.