



Your provider brings medical expertise, but you bring life experience. You know your body, your lifestyle, and what truly matters to you. You have an entire life outside of the provider's office. Your healthcare team wants to know about that life and where you're coming from. When you share this with your provider, you create a partnership where you can work together to make the best healthcare decisions for your unique situation.

Your personal preferences matter! Let your healthcare provider know what's important to you. This helps ensure your care is tailored to your needs and preferences, leading to better communication, trust, and a more satisfying healthcare experience.

Many people feel uncomfortable discussing their needs with their providers. But, think of it this way: Your healthcare provider is your partner in achieving your health goals. By actively participating in your care, you are empowering yourself and taking control of your health journey!

Here are some tips to help you communicate what is important to you:

### BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

- **Write down your questions and concerns.** Prioritize your most important issues to make sure they are addressed first. Bring a list of medications (including over-the-counter medications and supplements!), allergies, and a brief medical history, especially if you're new to the provider.
- **Consider bringing a trusted family member or friend with you.** They can offer extra ears, take notes, and help you remember information.

### DURING THE APPOINTMENT

- **Be open and honest.** Share all your symptoms (even if you think they are minor!), concerns about your diagnosis, treatment plan, the cost of the treatment, or any other worries.
- **Ask questions and actively listen.** Don't hesitate to ask for clarification and repeat back what you understand to ensure it's accurate.
- **Clearly state your preferences.** Share your concerns and explain your preferred treatment options, if any.

### AFTER THE APPOINTMENT

- **Review and make a plan.** Write down next steps and contact your provider with any questions or concerns.
- **Follow up.** Should you go to the pharmacy to pick up a new medication? Do you need to schedule a follow-up appointment?
- **Contact the office if things aren't working out.** If you are experiencing an uncomfortable medication side effect or are having trouble affording a test or procedure, contact your provider to discuss your options.

## DISCUSSING YOUR LIFE, WORK, AND FAMILY SITUATION WITH YOUR PROVIDER

Sharing aspects of your life, work, and family situations will allow you and your provider to work together to find solutions that balance your medical needs with your personal and professional responsibilities.

## DISCUSSING YOUR LIFE, WORK, AND FAMILY SITUATION WITH YOUR PROVIDER (CONTINUED)

- **Share your daily routine:** Explain your typical day, including work hours, childcare responsibilities, and any other commitments. For example, say: "I need to be able to travel for work as well as visit family from out of town"
- **Discuss your social life:** Explain how your health conditions might impact your social activities and relationships. For example, say: "My children are very active, and I want to be able to keep up with them."
- **Explain your financial situation:** Discuss any limitations on your ability to afford certain treatments or medications. For example, say: "I'm concerned about how this treatment will impact my monthly budget."

## BALANCING MEDICAL ADVICE WITH YOUR PERSONAL PRIORITIES

Here are some examples of how to balance medical advice with your preferences:

- **Working while undergoing treatment:** If your provider recommends a treatment that requires significant time off work, discuss flexible work arrangements, reduced hours, or the possibility of working remotely.
- **Maintaining an active lifestyle:** If you're an active person, discuss exercise options that are safe and appropriate for your condition. Work with your doctor to create a fitness plan that fits your lifestyle and goals.
- **Prioritizing quality of life:** If a treatment significantly impacts your quality of life, discuss alternative options with your provider. Explore treatments that may have fewer side effects or allow you to maintain the independence you are looking for.

**You are the expert on your own body and life. Your experiences, values, and priorities are unique. Your provider wants to understand your perspective and work with you to create a care plan that aligns with your goals.**

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