

# PROVIDER + PATIENT = COMMUNICATION

THE QUALITY OF A PATIENT'S HEALTHCARE MAY DEPEND MORE UPON THE QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION INSIDE THE EXAM ROOM THAN THE ACCUMULATION OF SCIENTIFIC FACTS.

## STRONG, OPEN COMMUNICATION

between a patient and physician or advanced practice provider builds trust and leads to better results, quality, safety and satisfaction.

The more active of a role a patient plays, the more likely they are to make the necessary changes to improve their health whether that is taking medication correctly or making a lifestyle change.

One of the best ways to improve communication is to ask questions during a medical visit. Patients may want to prepare a small list of questions prior to their visit.

## WANT TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE APPROACH TO YOUR HEALTHCARE? HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS:



### PREPARE FOR THE APPOINTMENT

Decide what you want to get out of your medical appointment. Do you want to talk about a specific health problem, change a medication, inquire about a possible test or talk about surgery or treatment options?

## MAKE YOUR INTENTIONS KNOWN

Tell the person at the front desk or your nurse that you have questions you want to ask during the appointment.

Many times questions – such as those that pertain to billing or test scheduling – can be answered by someone else other than the physician.

## 10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK

### SOME SAMPLE QUESTIONS CAN BE:

1. What is the test for?
2. How many times have you done this procedure?
3. When will I get the results?
4. Why do I need this treatment?
5. Are there any alternatives?
6. What are the possible complications?
7. Which hospital is best for my needs?
8. How do you spell the name of that drug?
9. Are there any side effects?
10. Will this medicine interact with medicines that I'm already taking?



### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

Consider bringing along a friend or family member who can act as a second pair of ears to make sure that all information relayed in an answer is properly understood. Take notes and if an answer seems confusing make that known.



### FOLLOW UP WHEN NECESSARY

A healthcare provider or doctor may have you fill out a prescription or make another appointment for tests, lab work or a follow-up visit. It's important to follow these instructions, but if at any point it seems confusing, follow-up with your healthcare team for clarification.

For more information on strengthening communication with your health care provider, visit [premierhealthnet.com/familyhealth](https://www.premierhealthnet.com/familyhealth)

SOURCES: Melinda Ruff, MD, Centerville Family Medicine; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).