

Chapter 4

Me and My Doctor



In this chapter, you can find information about:

1. **BEFORE:** How to prepare for my doctor appointment.
2. **DURING:** Getting the most out of my appointment
3. **AFTER:** Following my doctor's recommendations
4. What did I learn?

1. BEFORE: How to Prepare for My Doctor Appointment

Making an Appointment:

The first step before going to your doctor is to make your appointment:

- Find a time that works for both you and your doctor.
- Know where your doctor is located.
- Let your doctor know if you need language services.
- Ensure the doctor's office is accessible and that they can accommodate your needs.

Requesting Accommodations

If you need any accommodations, you will want to let the receptionist know before your appointment. Here are a few examples:

Wheelchair accessible

Private place to wait

Anxious/nervous around doctors

Extra time

Accessible exam tables

Other: _____

Finding Transportation:

Knowing how you will get to and from your appointment is important.

- If you take public transit, remember your transit pass or money.
- If you have a support person to drive you, make sure you schedule with them ahead of time.
- If you plan to travel by car, ask your doctor's office about parking options.
- If you take a "door-to-door" service, or medical transport, make sure you schedule ahead of time.

Note: If you live in a rural community it may take extra time to locate the resources and offices that you may need. You will need to consider the kinds of transportation you will need, what to do if accommodations you may need are not available, and make sure you have all the paperwork and information you need before you travel to your provider.

Planning with Your Support Person

A support person is someone you feel safe with and who you can trust. Not everyone will want or need a support person. If you choose to have one, they can assist by helping you:

- Make your appointment.
- Fill out the “Doctor’s Visit Planning Tool” or anything you have to help you remember what to ask your doctor.
- Prepare for your doctor visit by role-playing or helping you make a list of things you would like to talk to your doctor about.

Asking if You Will Have a Copay

Some insurances have copays, and some do not. Make sure to check with your insurance and see if you need to pay a copay at the doctor’s office. If you do have a copay, find out how much it is and bring the money with you to the doctor’s office.

What Should I Bring to My Appointment?

Below are some items you may want to bring to your appointment. Check with your doctor to be sure you know everything you need to bring.

Medical Insurance Card

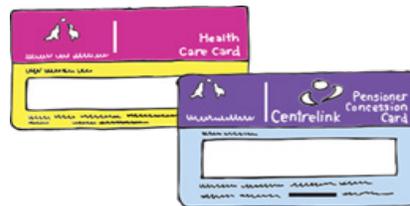
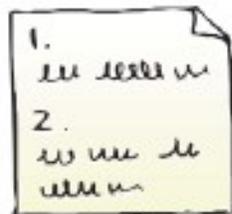


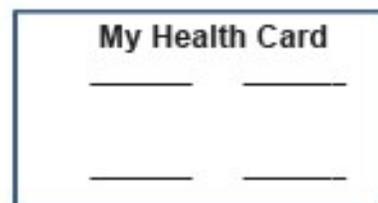
Photo Identification



Your “Doctor Visit Planning Tool” or “Health Passport”



My Health Card



2. DURING: Getting the Most Out of My Appointment

- 1 Speak up!** Let your doctor know the best way to communicate with you. With your doctor, go over the topics on your Health Passport or the planning materials you brought to the appointment. Discuss any concerns or questions you have. Make sure you understand any changes that are made having to do with your health or medications.
- 2 Ask Questions!** It is important that you ask questions about the diagnosis, treatment, and/or other options that may be available to you. Make sure you understand what the doctor is explaining. Ask if you need more information. Be your own best advocate.
- 3 Bring a support person** if you want or need one. They can help you take notes or assist you with communication.
- 4 Take notes** (or have your support person take notes) so later on you can remember what was discussed.
- 5 Review** everything you discussed with your doctor before leaving your appointment. Make sure you know if you need a follow up appointment or need to see a specialist. If you need a referral, the person at the front desk can help you.
- 6 Schedule a follow up** if your doctor recommended it. You can make your next appointment at the front desk before leaving your doctor's office. Make sure the appointment works for your schedule.



Making Choices with My Doctor

You have a say in your health. You can make your own choices at the doctor's office.



Tests: for example, a blood test



A plan for a healthy lifestyle: for example, being more active and/or eating healthier



Medicines and treatments: for example, pills for pain and creams for rashes



Referrals: for example, your doctor suggests you see a counselor to help with your mental health

You know your body the best so you have the right to have a say in all aspects of your health care.



If you don't know what choices to make you can:

- Ask for more time
- Ask more questions
- Ask for more information
- Ask for support

Remember you are in charge of your body.
You talk to the doctor about yourself.
The doctor works out what might help your health.
You can work together to have a healthier life.

Are there other ways
to get better?



You may feel worried about speaking up. This can be because people did not listen to you in the past. Taking someone with you for support can help. You can practice what to say before you go.

3. AFTER: Following My Doctor's Recommendations

1 Make sure medications and/or medical supplies have been ordered.

Sometimes your doctor's office can place your order for you. Find out when your items will be ready for pick up, and where you can get them.



2 Review your appointment. Look over the topics you and your doctor discussed. You may want to do this with your support person. Call the doctor's office if you have follow up questions.

3 Pick up your medications and/or medical supplies. Make sure you go over the directions for your medications with your pharmacist.

4 Remember to follow your plan for a healthy lifestyle. Try to stick to your plan. You might need support to do this. You can ask your support person to go over it with you and support you.

5 Don't forget your follow up appointments. Refer to your appointment reminder card, your calendar, or ask your support person to remind you. If you cannot make it to your appointment, call the doctor's office and make a new appointment for another date and time. Use the same steps that you used to set up your original doctor appointment to set up any new appointments, including:

- Finding transportation
- Planning with your support person
- Asking if you will have a copay

What did my doctor say?

Mal has been to his doctor.

He tries to remember what they talked about.

He thinks about what will help him.



- 1 Check with my support person, if I brought someone.
- 2 Read what my doctor wrote.
- 3 If I am still not sure, I can call the doctor.



Try to keep track of things.
It is up to you to take charge of your health and health care.
Do as much as you can.
It's OK to ask for help, if you need it.

Electronic Health Record (EHR)

Electronic Health Record is an online access to part of your medical records. This information is secure and private. Some of the reasons you may want to use electronic medical records are:

- Receive test results quicker
- Ask for your medication to be renewed
- Communicate with your doctor's office
- Keep track of your health
- View your recent doctor visit and the information that was discussed
- Schedule or cancel appointments
- Update your personal information such as address or phone

This is a free service and your doctor's office will give you a code to get started. Having your information available electronically is good because you can look at your visit summary to remember what you and your doctor discussed. You can also have a support person review it with you if you would like some extra help.



My Plan for a Healthy Lifestyle

You can choose to take steps that can help you live a healthy lifestyle. Plans you create with your doctor are especially important if you are pre-diabetic, diabetic or have other chronic conditions. Following your plan can help reduce or eliminate symptoms of chronic conditions.

The doctor said Mal should try to:

- Cut down on sugary snacks and eat more healthy snacks
- Cut down on soft drinks and drink more water
- Be active every day
- Get more sleep

They talked about what Mal's health plan could look like and how it would help him by doing the following on a daily basis.

Mal's Plan for a Healthy Lifestyle



Eat healthy

Drink plenty of water

Be active

Maintain a regular sleep schedule

**Every person has different abilities and needs.
Each health plan will look different.**



Try to stick to your plan.
You might need support.

You can ask your support person to go over it with you
and help you make any changes you want to make.

4. What Did I Learn?

I can take charge of my health care when I:

- Know how to make an appointment and how I will get there.
- Can bring a support person with me if I choose to.
- Know what to take with me when I go to the doctor.
- Get help to speak up if I need it.
- Let the doctor know the best way I communicate.
- Have a say and can make choices.
- Choose to follow my plan for a healthy lifestyle.

Notes:

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