



CalvertHealth

Medical Group

Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Next Health Care Provider Visit

1. Determine What You Want Out of the Appointment

- ✓ Is this a well visit, a preventive checkup, or a follow-up?
- ✓ Are you looking for a diagnosis: a name for what you have?
- ✓ Do you need a new treatment plan or a modification of what you're already doing?
- ✓ Do you want to discuss your prognosis: What will happen to you? What may the future bring?
- ✓ Are you looking for reassurance or help with feelings, fatigue, or depression?

2. Be Prepared -- Gather Your Medical Information

- ✓ Prepare a detailed medical history of your own health, and that of your immediate blood relatives.
- ✓ Prepare a list of your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter, natural, and herbal), including dose and frequency.
- ✓ If the provider orders tests to be completed prior to your appointment, call ahead to ensure that the office has received the results. Most imaging test results can be sent digitally right to your provider. If you need to bring the actual X-rays, MRIs, or other films to your appointment, find out where they are and make plans to pick them up in advance.

3. List Your Symptoms

- ✓ Keep a symptom diary so you can tell your doctor:
- ✓ When symptoms started
- ✓ What they feel like or look like: achy, burning, stabbing, dull, stiff, tingly, sore, annoying, crushing, red, swollen, oozing
- ✓ If you have pain, how severe it is on scale of 1 to 10
- ✓ What seems to trigger your symptoms
- ✓ How often they occur
- ✓ How long they last
- ✓ What seems to alleviate them

4. Empower Yourself with Knowledge

- ✓ Do research so you have a better understanding of medical terms the doctor might use.

5. Write Down Specific Questions You Want to Ask

- ✓ What diagnostic tests do I need?
- ✓ What exactly is my disease or condition?
- ✓ What are my treatment options?

6. Make a Contact List

- ✓ Include name and phone numbers for emergency contacts.
- ✓ List all providers who treat you and why, plus their phone and fax numbers and office address.
- ✓ Include your preferred pharmacy name, phone, and fax.

7. Get Insurance and Referral Authorizations in Advance

8. Have a Plan for Documenting What You Learn and Take Information home with You

- ✓ Use a notepad to jot down the answers to your questions and other notes.
- ✓ Alternatively, bring a caregiver or advocate to take notes so you can focus on what the provider is saying.
- ✓ Ask for brochures or educational materials.