

When Talking to Your Doctor ...

The single most important way you can stay healthy is to be an active member of your own health care team. One way to get high quality health care is to find and use information and take an active role in all the decisions made about your care. Research has shown that patients who have good relationships with their doctors tend to be more satisfied with their care – and to have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become partners in improving your health care.

Give information - Don't wait to be asked!

- ◆ You know important things about your symptoms and your health history. Tell your doctor what you think he or she needs to know.
- ◆ It is important to tell your doctor personal information – even if it makes you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable.
- ◆ Bring a 'health history' list with you, and keep it up-to-date. You might want to make a copy of the form for each member of your family.
- ◆ Always bring any medicines you are taking, or a list of those medicines (include when and how often you take them) and what strength. Talk about any allergies or reactions you have had to your medicines.
- ◆ Tell your doctor about any herbal products you use or alternative medicines or treatments you receive.
- ◆ Bring other medical information. Such as x-ray films, test results and medical records.

Get information ...

- ◆ Ask questions. If you don't, your doctor may think you understand everything that was said.
- ◆ Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered.

- ◆ You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions. This person can also help you understand and/or remember the answers.
- ◆ Take notes.
- ◆ Some doctors do not mind if you bring a tape recorder to help you remember things, but always ask first.
- ◆ Let your doctor know if you need more time. If there is not time that day, perhaps you can speak to a nurse or physician assistant on staff. Or, ask if you can call later to speak to someone.

Take information home

- ◆ Ask for written instructions.
- ◆ Your doctor also may have brochures and audiotapes and videotapes that can help you. If not, ask how you can get such materials.

Once you leave the doctor's office, follow up:

- ◆ If you have any questions, call.
- ◆ If your symptoms get worse, or if you have problems with your medicine, call.

Remember, quality matters, especially when it comes to your health.

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Risk

To laugh is to risk
appearing a fool

To weep is to risk
appearing sentimental

To reach out for another
is to risk involvement

To expose feelings is to risk
exposing your true self

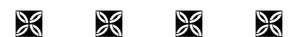
To place your ideas, your
dreams, before the crowd
is to risk their loss

To love is to risk not being
loved in return

To live is to risk dying

To hope is to risk despair

To try is to risk failure



But risks must be taken
because the greatest hazard
in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing
does nothing, has nothing,
is nothing.

He may avoid suffering
and sorrow, but he simply
cannot learn, feel, change,
grow, love ... live.

Chained by his certitudes,
he is a slave: he has
forfeited freedom.

Only a person who risks
is free.

(Anon)