

Take information home.

- Ask for written instructions.
- Request brochures or audio and video tapes.
- Ask for website addresses that can help you learn more when you get home.

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

- If you have questions, call.
- If your symptoms get worse, or if you have problems with your medicine, call.
- If you had tests and did not hear from your doctor, call for your test results.
- If your doctor said you need additional tests, make appointments at the lab or other offices to get them done.
- If your doctor said you should see a specialist, make an appointment.

Remember, the single-most important way you can stay healthy is to be an active member of your own healthcare team.

Get more information from
atomAlliance.org/patientcoordination



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Quick Tips

When Talking with Your Doctor



The single-most important way you can stay healthy is to be an active member of your own healthcare team.

Be an active member by creating a good relationship with your doctor. Research has shown that patients who have good relationships with their doctors tend to have better results and greater satisfaction with their care.

Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become effective partners in your care.

Give information.

- 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 or a personal health record with you and keep it up-to-date. Consider making copies for family members, in case of an emergency.
- Always bring all medicines or a complete list of medicines you are taking. Include when and how often you take them and at what strength. Talk about any allergies or reactions you have had to your medicines.
- Tell your doctor about any over-the-counter and 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 or remember the answers.
- Ask your doctor to draw pictures that could help explain something.
- Take notes to help remember what you talked about when you get home.
- Record your conversations to help you remember things. Some doctors don't mind if you bring a tape recorder, but always ask first.
- Let your doctor know if you need more time to talk. If your doctor doesn't have time that day, ask to speak to a nurse or physician assistant on staff, or ask if you can call later.
- Ask if your doctor has washed his or her hands before examining you. Research shows that handwashing can prevent the spread of infections. If you're uncomfortable asking this question directly, you might ask, "I've noticed that some doctors and nurses wash their hands or wear gloves. Why is that?"

