

10 Tips for Doctor Appointments

Getting the most from every appointment

1. Bring Someone with You

Medical trauma, appointment fatigue, and difficulty remembering can dramatically affect your ability to advocate for yourself in appointments. Bring a trusted loved one who knows you and your story. Oftentimes, your friends are better advocates for you in stressful environments. Talk to them before the appointment about your concerns, current symptoms, and desired outcomes. Have this person take notes so you can focus on the conversation.

2. Write a Symptom List

I often feel intense brain fog when I go to appointments, likely due to the stress of past experiences. A written-out and ranked list of symptoms is a back-pocket resource, ready to use if you need it. In this list, include patterns such as time of day, triggers, how long they last, how often you feel the symptom.

3. Be Prepared to Say “No”

Before the appointment think through your hard-stops, things you already know you aren't willing to do. The American medical system is built around pharmaceuticals and quick fixes, so you may feel pressured into something you don't want to do. Knowing these things prior to the appointment helps you stay grounded when you feel pressured.

4. Bring a One-Page Summary

Include a list of past diagnoses, past treatments and results, current medications and supplements, allergies, and any other relevant information. Bring this to every appointment and reference it when needed.

5. Maximize Your Time

Schedule the longest appointment slot possible and ask in advance if you can book a longer appointment. When the doctor asks at the end “Do you have any more questions for me?” always say yes. Include 2-3 key questions in your one-page summary that you need answers to.





6. Ask for Reasoning

When a provider gives a recommended medication or treatment, ask for their reasoning. This will help you decide if you agree and why.

7. Arrive with the Right Attitude

There's a balance between truthfully advocating for your health needs and taking out anger on the doctor in a disrespectful way. To help navigate this, here's a few tips: Always be truthful, stay grounded in the present moment, if you don't understand something or feel dismissed, say something, show respect, calmly express your emotions.

8. Arrive with Reasonable Expectations

A provider is ultimately a health consultant. You as the expert in your own life are consulting with a specially trained person who can potentially help find solutions for your ongoing health issues. But, just as business consultants aren't always helpful, healthcare consultants aren't always helpful either. Expect them to apply their knowledge to your case, but don't expect it to be helpful every time.

9. Don't Apologize for Taking Time

You're the patient, helping you is their job. You're paying for a service.

10. Don't See Bad Providers Twice

Trust your gut feeling after you leave an appointment. Ask yourself: "Is this person capable of helping me? Does this person genuinely care about my health?" If the answer is no to either, find someone else.

BONUS: AI Prompt for Preparation

Copy-paste the following into any AI chatbot and fill it in. This will give a roadmap for how the appointment could go and what to expect. When using this resource, keep it general, leave out your name and personal details.

What would a person seeing a [TYPE OF DOCTOR] for [SYMPTOMS] likely expect?

- *How long it's lasted: [DURATION]*
- *Already tried: [TREATMENTS/MEDS]*

Goal: [DESIRED OUTCOME]. Explain simply: (1) how a doctor usually reads these symptoms, (2) tests they typically order, (3) treatments they try first, (4) good questions to ask, (5) pitfalls doctors may fall into. Keep it short and clear. You're not a doctor — this is a general heads-up, not medical advice.