

EMPOWERED PATIENT®

“Ten Things Patients Should Know” Series

TEN WAYS TO BE PREPARED AT A DOCTOR VISIT

1. If you think you have a complicated condition or diagnosis, **ALERT THE STAFF** at the time you make the appointment that you may need extra time with the doctor.
2. **UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBERS AND INSURANCE** at each visit. Bring your insurance card. Alert the office to any changes in your medical history, medications or marital status.
3. What is the **MAIN REASON FOR YOUR VISIT?** Think about this ahead of time and be able to answer this question.
4. Have your **TOP TWO OR THREE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS** prepared. Try to summarize each in a few sentences. Be specific and direct.
5. **SYMPTOMS**, if any, should be written down in advance. Record the symptoms you have noticed, how often they occur, what seems to make them worse and what makes them feel better.
6. Bring **WRITING MATERIALS** to take notes.
7. Have an **ADVOCATE** present to assist in listening, asking questions and taking notes.
8. Leave with a clear **TREATMENT PLAN**; know how and when you should follow up, how test results will be communicated to you, and when your next visit is needed.
9. **IF YOU ARE GIVEN A PRESCRIPTION, BE SURE YOU CAN READ IT.** Write down the name of the medication, dosage, directions, and why it is being prescribed. Add it to your medication list.
10. Enter the **DATE AND PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IN YOUR MEDICAL JOURNAL.** Obtain copies of all test results, including x-rays and scans, and keep them in your home.