Center for Disability Leadership
Partnership for People with Disabilities
Virginia Commonwealth University

www.vcu.edu/partnership/CenterforDisabilityLeadership

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Be the Driver on the Road to Good Health

Learn to Manage Your Health Care
Tips for Talking to Your Doctor

- Taking an active role in your health care can help you get the best care possible from your doctor.
Talk to your doctor

- Be sure to tell your doctor about any current and past health care issues or concerns. It's important to share any information you can, even if you're embarrassed.
Talk to your doctor

➤ Give your doctor the following information during the exam:

- Any symptoms you are having
- Your health history
- Personal information, including whether you are stressed or if your life is changing
Talk to your doctor

- Give your doctor the following information during the exam:
  - Any medicines you are currently taking. Bring them with you or create a list of all your medicines.
  - Include information about when and how often you take the medicine and any side effects you may have from taking them.
Talk to your doctor

- Give your doctor the following information during the exam:
  - Any vitamins or supplements you take
  - Any x-rays, tests results or medical records you have can be brought with you to the appointment
Ask questions

- Ask every time you don't understand something
- If you have questions before the appointment, just write them down and ask them during the exam
- Tell your doctor when you need more time to talk about something
Take Information Home With You

- Notes that you have taken during the appointment.
  - It's ok for you to write down the information your doctor gives you.
  - Sometimes it helps to bring a friend or family member with you. They can help write down the answers to your questions.
Take Information Home With You

- Written instructions from your doctor.
- A tape recording
  - Ask your doctor if it's ok to bring a tape recorder to the appointment
- Brochures or other educational materials
  - If there aren't any available, ask where you can find some
Follow Up With Your Doctor

- Make sure to follow any instructions your doctor gave you during the appointment, like taking medicine, scheduling a test or scheduling an appointment with a specialist.

- If you’re confused or if you've forgotten some information, it's ok to contact your doctor.
Follow Up With Your Doctor

Some common reasons you may need to call your doctor:

- If you have any questions after the appointment, ask to leave a message with the doctor or speak with a nurse.
- If you start to feel worse or have problems with your medicine.
- If you had tests and haven’t gotten the results.
Creating a Health Journal

What is a health journal?

A health journal is a complete record of your health. You keep the health journal yourself. The journal helps you keep track of every aspect of your health.
What is included in a health journal?

- A health journal should keep track of your overall health.
  - Illness or injury;
  - Hospitalizations;
  - Surgeries;
  - Allergies;
  - Medications, vitamins or supplements that you are taking and how often you take them; and
  - Diseases or illness in your immediate family
What is included in a health journal?

- When you fill in your health history, be sure to include the dates
  - For example, if you were hospitalized, write down the date that you were admitted and the date you were discharged
  - You can also include notes on how you were feeling
Why should I have a health journal?

- A health journal is an easy way to keep track of your health.
- By recording your health history, you can keep track of illnesses, medications, treatments and procedures.
- Be sure to take your health journal to your doctor’s appointments. This will help you provide your doctor with exact information about your health. Your doctor can also help you keep your health journal up-to-date.
Why should I have a health journal?

- Keeping track of your health history helps you to be an informed, knowledgeable patient
- You are in control of your healthcare
- You can help keep yourself healthy
- You will know what makes you sick and how to take better care of yourself
Starting your journal

- This is an example of a health journal. You can customize your journal to include any information that you want.

- Illness/Injury: Date:________________________

- Hospitalizations: Date:________________________

- Surgeries: Date:________________________

- Date:________________________________________

- ____________________________________________

- ____________________________________________

- ____________________________________________