

Talking with Your Doctor

Questions to Ask at Your Next Visit

It is important to talk openly with your doctor and ask questions about your health problems and treatments. Below are examples of questions you may want to ask your doctor. Print this list and take it with you to your next office visit.

High blood pressure and diabetes

- What is high blood pressure?
- Do I have high blood pressure?
- What is diabetes?
- What type of diabetes do I have?
- Does having high blood pressure and diabetes put me at risk for other health problems, such as heart disease?
- Can I feel my high blood pressure?
- What is my blood pressure goal?
- What is my blood sugar level goal?
- How often should my blood pressure be checked?
- How often should I check my blood sugar levels?
- Are there steps I can take to help control both my blood pressure and my diabetes?
- Is there a medicine that may help control my blood pressure?

Medicine

- What is the name of the medicine?
- How does this medicine work?
- How and when do I take this medicine?
- For how long will I need to take this medicine?
- What foods, drinks, other medicines, and activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?
- What side effects might I have while taking this medicine?
- What should I do if I notice side effects?
- What should I do if I miss a dose of my medicine?
- How often may I need to have the medicine refilled?
- How will I know if the medicine is working?
- What are the risks for taking this medicine?
- What are the risks for NOT taking this medicine?
- Will this medicine affect my other health goals, such as losing weight or controlling my diabetes?

Weight loss

- What is a healthy weight goal for me?
- How much weight should I aim to lose each week?
- How often should I check my weight?

Exercise

- How can exercise help me?
- What types of exercise are safe for me to do?
- How often should I exercise?
- What can I do to keep my blood sugar levels stable while exercising?

Diet

- What types of foods should I avoid or eat more of?
- How much salt and sugar should I limit myself to each day?
- How many calories or grams of fat should I eat each day? Can you give me examples of these amounts?
- How can I get help changing my diet?
- Can I drink alcohol (wine, beer, hard liquor)?

Quitting cigarettes and tobacco

- What can I do to ease the urge to smoke?
- Can I take a medicine or use a nicotine patch or gum to help me stop smoking?
- After quitting, how can I keep from gaining weight?
- How long will it take after quitting to lower my risk for other health problems, such as heart disease?

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Tips for Making the Most of Each Visit

The tips below can help you prepare for and make the most of each doctor visit. These tips can also help you stay on track with treatment after your visit.

Before your office visit:

- Make a list of your questions, symptoms, and concerns. Bring this list to your next visit
- Ask a family member or friend to go with you to your appointment
- Make a list of all the prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal medicines and supplements you take, as well as their doses and how often you take them. Bring this list to your next visit

During your visit:

- Review your list of symptoms, questions, and concerns
- Review the medicines you are taking and ask about any changes that may need to be made
- Write down any instructions you need to follow after your visit. This may include changes to your diet or exercise routines
- Learn how to read food labels so you can know how much fat, salt (sodium), and cholesterol are in each serving
- Ask for the name and contact information of a person you can call if you have questions after your visit
- Ask your doctor when the results of any tests will be ready
 - Ask if the results will be mailed to you or if the office will call you
 - Ask to receive a copy of the results

After your visit:

- Use the Blood Pressure and Treatment Trackers on this site to help track your progress toward your health goals. You may also want to track changes to your blood sugar levels, exercise, diet, weight, and cholesterol
 - Bring this chart to your next visit and review it with your doctor
 - If you are not making progress or seeing change, ask your doctor what else you can do, or why your progress is slow
- Use a calendar, alarm, or pillbox to help you remember to take your medicines each day
- Call the doctor before starting any new medicine, including prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal medicines and supplements