

Talking with Your Doctor



Below are lists of questions adopted from the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](http://www.aahrq.gov) (AHRQ) that you could print out. Take these questions with you every time you visit your doctor. Ask them so you know what is being communicated.

Did your doctor give you a prescription?

- What is the name of the medicine?
- Can I take a generic version of this medicine?
- What is the medicine for?
- How am I supposed to take it?
- When should I take my medicine?
- How much medicine should I take?
- How long do I need to take the medicine?
- When will the medicine start working?
- Can I stop taking my medicine if I feel better?
- Can I get a refill?
- Are there any side effects?
- When should I tell someone about a side effect?
- Do I need to avoid any food, drinks, or activities?
- Does this new prescription mean I should stop taking any other medicines I'm taking now?
- Can I take vitamins with my prescription?
- What should I do if I forget to take my medicine?
- What should I do if I accidentally take more than the recommended dose?
- Is there any written information I can take home with me?

Did you recently receive a medical diagnosis?

- What is my diagnosis?
- What is the technical name of my disease or condition, and what does it mean in plain English?
- What is my prognosis (outlook for the future)?
- What changes will I need to make?
- Is there a chance that someone else in my family might get the same condition?
- Will I need special help at home for my condition?
- Is there any treatment?
- What are my treatment options?
- How soon do I need to make a decision about treatment?
- What are the benefits and risks associated with my treatment options?
- Is there a clinical trial (research study) that is right for me?
- Will I need any additional tests?
- What organizations and resources do you recommend for support and information?

Are you scheduled to have a medical test?

- What is the test for?
- How is the test done?
- Will the test hurt?
- How accurate is the test?
- Is this test the only way to find out that information?
- What are the benefits and risks of having this test?
- What do I need to do to prepare for the test?
- How many times have you performed the test?
- When will I get the results?
- What will the results tell me?



Are you considering treatment for an illness or condition?

- What are my treatment options?
- What do you recommend?
- Is the treatment painful?
- How can the pain be controlled?
- What are the benefits and risks of this treatment?
- How much does this treatment cost?
- Will my health insurance cover the treatment?
- What are the expected results?
- When will I see results from the treatment?
- What are the chances the treatment will work?
- Are there any side effects?
- What can be done about them?
- How soon do I need to make a decision about treatment?
- What happens if I choose to have no treatment at all?

Are you choosing a hospital?

- Which hospital has the best care for my condition?
- Is this hospital covered by my health insurance?
- Does the hospital meet national quality standards?
- How does the hospital compare with others in my area?
- Has the hospital had success with my condition?
- Does my clinician have privileges (is allowed to work) at this hospital?
- How well does the hospital check and improve on its own quality of care?



Are you choosing a clinician?

- Is this clinician part of my health plan?
- Does this clinician have the background and training I need?
- Is this clinician able to work at the hospital I like?
- Can I talk to this clinician and ask questions easily?
- Does this clinician listen to me?
- Does this clinician wash his or her hands between examining each patient?

Are you choosing a health plan?

- What are my options?
- Does this health plan provide the benefits and services I need?
- Does this health plan offer the clinicians and hospitals I want?
- Can I afford this health plan?

