

You can take steps to improve your health care experience. Following these steps will help you better advocate and care for both you and your loved ones.

- 1. Have a plan for every provider visit.** Prioritize what you want to talk and learn about. Visit times can be limited, so coming in with an agenda will maximize your time. Take notes to review later and follow up if needed.
- 2. Ask questions if anything is unclear.** Don't be embarrassed to ask your provider to explain something you don't understand. Repeat back what you hear to prevent any misunderstanding.
- 3. Request information in plain language.** Ask for materials such as handouts, photos, diagrams, or videos.
- 4. Bring a friend or family member to your visit, if possible.** This person can take notes so you can concentrate on simply listening. If you're attending a virtual visit, ask if they can join the call.
- 5. Tap into others' expertise.** Ask your healthcare provider if they have a "Patient Advocate" or "Navigator". These are trained professionals whose job it is to help you navigate the healthcare system.
- 6. Look for multilingual providers, if needed.** Many online profiles will list the languages a provider speaks.
- 7. Use technology to your advantage.** Your provider may offer an electronic version of your health record that can make it easier to manage and share your health information. Some of these systems allow you to schedule appointments, review test results and provider notes, store information about your prescriptions, and communicate with providers.
- 8. Be a careful media consumer.** There's no shortage of health information on TV, radio, websites, and social media. However, information can be incomplete, conflicting, or inaccurate.
- 9. Attend health education lectures.** Many healthcare providers offer a variety of in-person or online educational events covering topics that may interest you. These events are often free and led by physicians and other health care professionals.
- 10. Provide feedback.** You may have opportunities to share your opinion on ways organizations can improve their health literacy efforts. These may include patient surveys, online feedback prompts, or focus groups. Your voice plays a valuable role in our efforts to meet patients' needs better.