

Are you choosing a hospital?

Ask:

- 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 long-term care?

Ask:

- What kind of services do I need?

- What are my care options?

- Will my health insurance cover long-term care?

- Will this facility meet my needs?

- How is this care facility rated?

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Be Prepared for Medical Appointments

Build Your Question List



Did your clinician give you a prescription?

Ask:

- What is the name of the medicine?

- How do you spell the name?

- 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?

- Are there any tests I need to take while I'm on this medicine?

Are you scheduled to have medical tests?

Ask:

- 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?

- What's the next step after the test?

Did you recently receive a diagnosis?

Ask:

- 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 considering treatment for an illness or condition?

Ask:

- 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?

Did your clinician recently recommend surgery?

Ask:

- Why do I need surgery?

- What kind of surgery do I need?

- What will you be doing?

- What are the benefits and risks of having this surgery?

- Have you done this surgery before?

- How successful is this surgery?

- Which hospital is best for this surgery?

- Will the surgery hurt?

- Will I need anesthesia?

- How long will the surgery take?

- How long will it take me to recover?

- How long will I be in the hospital?

- What will happen after the surgery?

- How much will the surgery cost?

- Will my health insurance cover the surgery?

- Is there some other way to treat my condition?

- What will happen if I wait or don't have this surgery?

- Where can I get a second opinion?

Are you choosing a health plan?

Ask:

- 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?

Are you choosing a clinician?

Ask:

- 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?

For more information, go to:
www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer