

# Improving Your Health by Standing Up for Yourself (Self-Advocacy)

Lesson presented at 2021 WAHCE State Conference by Sara Busche and Robert Nix, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Human Ecology and Division of Extension. The full lesson can be found on the WAHCE Inc. website.

**Why Do You Want to be Healthy?**

**Is it OK to ask questions and advocate for yourself at Medical Appointments?**

**Think About a Previous Medical Appointment. What went Well? What Didn't?**

**Did you ever forget to ask something after leaving a medical appointment?**

## Common Concerns Shared by Patients

- The provider talked too fast so it was hard to digest the information
- You didn't have enough time with the provider
- You didn't ask the questions you wanted to ask
- You didn't understand the different treatment options or your new medication routine
- You felt disrespected by the provider

## Benefits of Asking Questions

- Make sure you are not taking 2 of the same medicines
- Improve health
- Share your concerns and worries
- Just because something is in your medical record does not mean your doctor has seen it

## Strategies to Remember Health Information after Asking Questions at a Medical Appointment

- Bring a friend or relative along to listen
- Take notes
- Download an app on your phone to record the discussion with your doctor
- After the appointment, write down any other questions that you have. Call the doctor's office back to answer your questions and confirm your treatment plan.
- Reflect on the experience and make plans to improve your conversation next time.

## Develop an Action Plan (Worksheet attached)

Read through the list of questions on the handout. Use empty spaces to write additional questions you have for your provider.

What 3 questions are most important to ask at your next appointment?

Providers are receptive to questions

Health can improve by asking questions

Patients find it helpful to ask questions

Question-asking strengthens the relationship with your provider

# Medical Appointment Action Plan

Medical appointment date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

What is this appointment for? \_\_\_\_\_

What 3 questions do you want to make sure to ask at this appointment?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What strategy will you use to remember what you and your provider discuss?

\_\_\_\_\_

Other questions you might have during your medical appointment

1. What is the test for?

2. When will I get the results?

3. Why do I need this treatment?

4. Are there any other options?

5. What happens if I don't do anything?

6. What are the possible problems that may happen after this procedure?

7. How do you spell the name of that drug?

8. Are there any side effects?

9. Will this medicine interact with medicines that I'm already taking?

Notes: What did your provider say that you want to remember?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you want to be sure to ask at your next medical appointment?

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