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Caregiving > Tips and Advice for Giving Care

Make the Most of Doctor Visits When You're Caring for Someone



Some people **rely on loved ones** who take on a much larger caregiving role—attending doctor visits, **administering medication**, and agreeing to be on call when necessary. If you're a caregiver, it's important to learn all you can about your loved one's condition and open up communication with his or her doctor. This can help you get your loved one the best treatment.

The following advice may help you make the most of your conversations with the doctor.

Print out the list and take it with you to your next visit!

- **State your role.** Introduce yourself as the caregiver, and let the doctor know you're there to help support his or her recommendations and be part of the health care team.
- **Come prepared.** Before the appointment, help your loved one make a written list of any concerns he or she wants to discuss. Prioritize your needs—you may not have enough time to cover everything at one office visit. Agree on what each of you will talk about.
- **Take notes.** Health care appointments go by quickly. Taking good notes will help you remember important instructions. Before you leave the office, review main points with the provider to make sure you both agree on what was discussed.
- **Ask questions.** Your loved one may be overwhelmed or nervous during the appointment, so be ready to ask questions on her or his behalf. Depending on the reason for the office visit, you may want to find out: What might have caused this symptom? What do you hope to learn from the test(s) you're ordering? What are the treatment options?
- **Don't be shy.** Speak up if you don't understand what the doctor is saying, or if you have concerns about the health of the person in your care. If you're not comfortable doing this when your loved one is present, consider calling the doctor before the visit.

Check out these tips on handling checkups

What if:

The person you're caring for asks you to be a silent observer during a checkup. However, the doctor directs all the questions to you. What do you do?

Try this:

Graciously remind the doctor that you are there for support, but that the patient is in charge of managing his or her condition.



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Try this:

Stay positive. Remind everyone that you are all under some stress, but that you are all working toward the same goal. Remaining positive, patient, and supportive can go a long way.

What if:

The person you are caring for is older. Lately, he or she has been having trouble remembering the things he or she needs to do to help manage his or her condition. How do you get the person under your care to discuss this with the doctor at the checkup?

Try this:

Before the visit, speak with the person you are caring for about the things he or she needs to do as part of his or her condition management plan and find out if he or she is having trouble following the plan. Let your friend or family member know that the doctor can customize the treatment plan to his or her age and specific complications. This may help alleviate any concerns the patient may have about struggling with his or her condition management plan.

Discover [more tips to help](#) care for a loved one.

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