

# TALKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR



**Taking an active role in your health care**



National Institute on Aging

[www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov)

# You're an official partner in your healthcare team



In this role, you will be expected to:

- Ask questions
- Speak up

# Easier Said Than Done?

Today, we'll talk about how to:

- Get ready for an appointment
- Share information
- Make decisions with your doctor



# Activity: What Did You Eat Yesterday?



List everything you ate and drank yesterday, including approximate portion size.

# Getting Ready for an Appointment

Before you go to the doctor:

- Create a plan
  - ☐ List and prioritize your concerns
  - ☐ Note other health and life changes since your last visit



# Getting Ready for an Appointment

- Gather information to take with you
  - ☐ Other doctors' contact information
  - ☐ Insurance cards
  - ☐ Medical history
  - ☐ Medicine (prescriptions, over-the-counter pills, vitamins, supplements, eye drops)

# Getting Ready for an Appointment

- Think about what you'll need to see, hear, and communicate during your visit:



- ☐ Wear your glasses and your hearing aids
- ☐ Consider bringing a family member or friend
- ☐ Ask your doctor for an interpreter, if you need one

# Set Your Plan Into Action!

Sharing information  
with your doctor  
during the visit





# Activity: Describe the Image

- What do you think is going on in this photo?
- What could this woman be feeling? What might be her symptoms?



# Sharing Information with Your Doctor



- ☐ Start with your symptoms
  - What are they?
  - When did they start?
  - How often do you have them? All the time or sometimes?
  - What makes them better or worse?
  - How do they affect your daily life?

# Sharing Information with Your Doctor

- ☐ Go over your medications
- ☐ Tell the doctor about your habits
- ☐ Voice other concerns



# Doctor-Patient Communication is a Dialogue



: You share your health concerns



: **Your doctor asks** questions about your symptoms



: You answer the questions



: **Your doctor shares** the diagnosis and treatment



: You ask questions to better understand the plan



: **Your doctor answers** the questions

# Questions To Ask About Medical Tests

- What will the test tell us?
- What does it involve?
- How should I get ready?
- Are there any dangers or side effects?



# Questions To Ask About Your Diagnosis



- What may have caused this condition?
- How long will it last? Is it permanent?
- How is this condition treated or managed?
- How will it affect me?

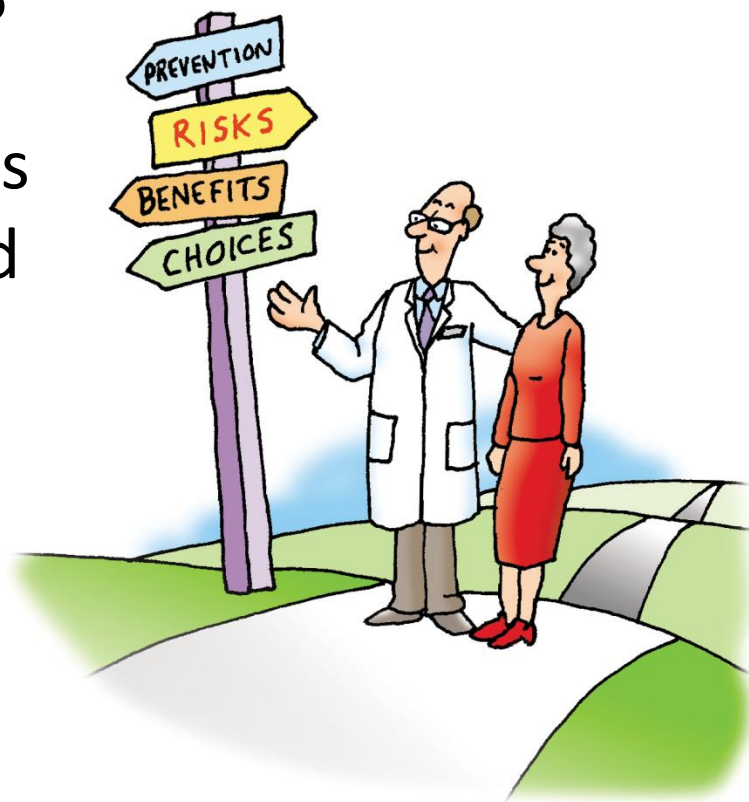
# Repeat in Your Own Words

“So I think what you’re saying is...

...Did I get that right?”

# Questions To Ask About Treatment Options

- What are my treatment choices?
- What are the risks and benefits?
- Ask yourself—which treatment is best for me, given my values and circumstances?





# Maintaining the Doctor-Patient Partnership

## Closing thoughts:

1. Prepare for your appointment by writing down a list of your concerns.
2. Share any changes in your medical history and a complete list of your medicines.
3. Make sure you understand what the doctor is telling you.
4. Take notes or ask the doctor to write down information to help you remember.



# For More Information

Want more free information about health and aging?

Contact:



National Institute on Aging

[www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov)

1-800-222-2225