

Questions for your doctor

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Before you leave the doctor's office, ask these 2 things^{6,8}:

References

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When receiving a new diagnosis or recommendation from your doctor, there are some general questions you may want to ask the doctor. Just remember the 5Ws and an H: "Who", "What", "Where", "When", "Why" and "How." The chart below offers some general questions for your doctor using this framework. Organize your questions before your appointment so that you are more prepared.¹⁻³

There may be additional questions you may need to ask based on your specific diagnosis or treatment. For example, a person diagnosed with diabetes or cancer may have questions specific to that particular disease.⁴⁻⁵ Or there maybe question about the side effects, effectiveness, or duration of a new treatment that has been prescribed.



Who



What



Where



When



Why



How

New diagnosis⁶

New treatment⁶

| | |
|---|---|
| Who usually gets this disease or condition? | Who usually gets the treatment? |
| What caused the disease or condition? What is the short and long term prognosis (likely course of disease)? What are the signs and symptoms? | What are my treatment options? What are the risks and benefits of each option? |
| Where should I go to get medical testing? Where can I get additional information or a second opinion? | Where will I be treated? At home? In an outpatient clinic? In a hospital? |
| When can I expect to see the signs and symptoms from the disease (if expected)? When will I have my next laboratory tests, results, or medical visits related to this diagnosis? | When can I expect treatments to start and/or stop? |
| Why did I get the disease? | Why do I need this treatment? Why might someone consider delaying or not having the treatment? |
| How will the disease or condition impact me over the long-term? How is the disease or condition be treated? | How well will the treatment work? How would the treatment help? |

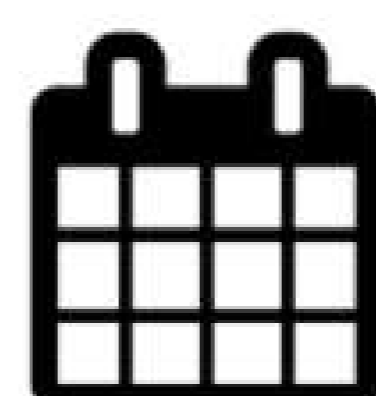


At the time of a new diagnosis, you may receive a lot of information at once and it is normal to not understand everything right away. Medical information can be complicated and you should feel comfortable asking your doctor to repeat any answers during the visit, or later by phone or email. You may also request for the information in a different way. The doctor may be able to provide other resources, brochures, or materials, or point you to credible sources of information online.⁷

Before you leave the doctor's office, ask these 2 things^{6,8}:



What do I need to do next?



When will I talk to you about this again?

- Will I need additional testing?
- Do I need to go see a specialist?
- Do I need to change my daily routine?

- Schedule a follow-up visit before you leave the office, or
- Mark on your calendar to call the doctor's office to follow-up on results

It is important to understand your doctor's recommendation for next steps in your care and make a note of these.⁸⁻⁹ You should follow up with your doctor:⁹



- If you experience any side effects or other problems with your medicines.
- If your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor.
- If you receive any new prescriptions or start any over-the-counter medicines.
- To get results of the tests you have taken.
- To ask about test results that you do not understand.

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