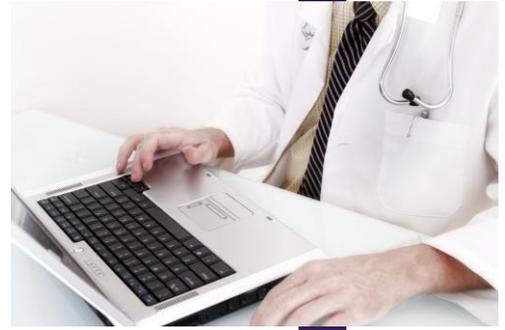


THE EDUCATED PATIENT

Welcome back to the second part of the series “The Educated Patient”. Last month the article focused on preparing for your doctor’s visit. This month, the series takes a look at pertinent questions concerning diagnosis, symptoms and treatments. Once again, always have a notebook and pen in hand and if possible, have a family member or friend accompany you. This list of questions could be beneficial to you during your next doctor’s visit.



1. If you are seeing a new physician, discuss their thoughts on patient physician communication.
2. Does the physician agree to questions concerning your health? If there is a lack of communication, this may not be the right physician for you.
3. Will you be the physician for my appointments?
4. What is the procedure if assistance is needed after hours?
5. What do you think is causing my problem?
6. Could there be another condition that is causing this problem?
7. Will I require any type of testing?
8. Will this be covered by my insurance?
9. Is this test needed, and are there alternative tests (blood work)?
10. Will the test hurt?
11. How safe are the test, and what are the benefits and risks?
12. How exact are the test for this condition?
13. What is the preparation, and are there alternatives? Some people fear an enclosed MRI, so request if an opened MRI can be used?
14. If medications are prescribed, can I take a generic form?
15. Can I take this with vitamins and over the counter medications?
16. What are the side effects and possible cost?
17. If the medications are too expensive, does the physician have samples or part of a research group?
18. What is the treatment plan for this diagnosis and will it be long term?
19. What are the pros and cons of the treatment that is chosen?
20. Will there be side effects of the treatment?
21. How effective is this treatment, and what is the recent research on this type of treatment?
22. If the symptoms get worse, when should I contact the physician?
23. If surgery is required, what are the risks and what are the alternatives?
24. Will you follow my case in the hospital, or will a hospitalist?
25. Has the surgeon performed this surgery before, and if yes how often?
26. What is the percentage of hospital acquired infections?
27. After surgery, what should I expect concerning pain?

Use this list as a guideline for future appointments, and add your own questions to the list. Before your next visit, research the website, www.healthcarebluebook.com for information about the cost of healthcare.

