



Suggestions for Maximizing your Time in the Exam Room

Sometimes the pressures of a busy practice cause doctors and staff to forget or overlook some of the things that maximize your visit. If so, please use the following suggestions to help them.

- 1. Select the 2 or 3 things that are important today** – Think of the one thing that is really bothering you today and focus your doctor on that issue. In medical terminology, that's called the "Chief Complaint." If several things are bothering you, limit them to 2 or 3 and decide their priority.
 - a. Be prepared to give a brief description of each problem, how long you've had each one and whether there is any family history of each problem.
 - b. If you try to cover too much with the doctor, you'll get overloaded with information.
 - c. You want to focus you and your doctor's time on solving one problem at a time. "You eat an elephant one bite at a time!"
 - d. Ask to schedule another visit in several weeks to address your other problems.
- 2. Bring a list of your prescriptions, and their dose and frequency**
 - a. If you don't have a list of your medications, bring the bottles.
 - b. About 30% of all medical errors are caused by medication errors. This happens especially when you enter or leave a hospital.
 - c. Know which prescriptions need a refill. If you need more than 3 refill prescriptions written, let the appointment scheduler or front desk know so that the prescription writing can be done outside of the time you have with the doctor so that precious time isn't wasted.
- 3. Let the staff know beforehand of referrals you know you need.**
 - a. Quite often you know that you need a referral for lab work, home health care, medical equipment or other care. Just like prescriptions, let the staff know of these so that arrangements can be made to handle the related paperwork outside of the exam time so that you don't waste valuable time with your doctor.
- 4. Completely fill out paperwork before going back to the exam room.**
 - a. The staff isn't trying to ruin your day by asking that you fill out questionnaires that are one, two or more pages long. They're trying to help you maximize your time with the doctor. The information you provide on the questionnaires is valuable to your doctor.
 - b. Tell the staff if you're not finished with the paperwork and ask them to wait until you are finished to take you into the exam room. Again, don't waste your time with the doctor filling out forms.

Doctors have dedicated their lives to treating their patients. But, the healthcare system today puts a lot of pressure on them which takes away from the time that they can spend with you. They want to spend quality time with you. When you understand how to make the best of their time, both of you will enjoy your time together.