



WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW

BETTER COMMUNICATION LEADS TO BETTER HEALTHCARE

DOCTOR-PATIENT COMMUNICATION FACT SHEET

What to do before your appointment:

1. Keep a journal of how you feel physically and emotionally
2. Record when your symptoms start, what helps them or aggravates them
3. Note physical changes as well as mood swings: when they occur, how long they last, what type of emotion(s) you experience
4. Bring your journal (or notes on how you've been feeling) with you and, if you can, give the doctor a copy for her/his files
5. Call your doctor's office the day before to confirm your appointment if the office doesn't call you; and call the day of your appointment to see if the doctor is running on time
5. Ask what health screenings are appropriate for you
6. Bring a list of your medications, prescription and over-the-counter (including vitamins, quantities and dose)
7. Bring a list of your questions and tell the doctor that you'd like to talk to her/him for a few minutes after the examination and once you've had a chance to get dressed (it's so much more comfortable and less intimidating)
8. If tests, treatments, or medications are suggested, ask about the pros and cons of each choice
9. The better prepared you are, the better the doctor will be able to understand your needs and be able to help you

What you should bring to your appointment and questions to ask:

1. Bring a friend or relative to listen with you. It will make you feel more comfortable
2. Bring your family medical history
3. Note causes of death of parents, grandparents, and siblings as well as major illnesses they had (i.e. cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, etc.)
4. Ask about the steps you can take to lower your risk for these illnesses
5. Follow Up:
 1. Were all your questions answered? If not, call the office and ask the doctor to call you back when she/he is free and ask about what time. Tell the receptionist you will only need a few minutes but it's important
 2. If you were given prescriptions, don't forget to have them filled and take them as prescribed
 3. If the doctor changed your medications, don't forget to discard the ones in your medicine cabinet, as you won't be using them anymore
 4. Don't hesitate to obtain a second opinion from another physician affiliated with another hospital

This Fact Sheet is to be distributed at Healthy Women, Healthy Lives programs. It can be reprinted for inclusion in your chapter bulletins. Contact womenshealth@hadassah.org to receive an email version. For more information on this subject, please refer to your chapter's Healthy Women, Healthy Lives Facilitator Guide (R1005a), Section Two. Women's Health and Advocacy can provide a speaker for this topic at your programs.