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Get ready for your next doctor visit

Here's what to expect

Most routine doctor visits are alike. During the visit, your doctor will usually:

- Ask some questions
- Do a physical exam
- Order tests, as needed
- Give you medical advice or treatment

This is a great time to ask questions. Your doctor can explain things you don't understand. And you can get more information about your health.

Planning makes the visit productive

Preparing for the visit is useful. To start, make a list of questions. This way, you remember what to ask when you're in the doctor's office.

While you're at it, list any medicine you are taking. This includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbs or supplements.

You might also ask a family member or friend to go with you. They can remind you of questions you have.

Review your medical history

Your doctor might also go over your medical history, especially during a first visit. This helps your doctor diagnose and treat you correctly.

Your history includes:

- Medical problems you have now or had in the past
- Surgeries
- Hospital stays
- Habits like exercise, diet or tobacco use

Think about these, too

You might talk about other topics with your doctor.

Allergies. Tell your doctor if you have had a bad reaction to *any* medicine. This reaction could be itching, a rash or shortness of breath.

Family history. Your doctor might want to know about medical problems in your immediate family. This includes parents, brothers and sisters, and children.

More questions. At the end of the visit, ask if there is anything else you need to know. And find out if you need another visit.

When you and your doctor work together, you can work toward better health.

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