



Flu Prevention

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Going to the doctor, or any health care provider, is a challenging proposition, to say the least. Almost no one wants to go because it usually means that there is something wrong with us, and no one ever wants to be sick with anything. And once we get there, the entire process can be somewhat intimidating. The terminology is confusing, and there is so much information to process. What's worse is that when everyone at the doctor's office or at the hospital seems to move so fast, and knows where everything is, we are frequently afraid to speak up and ask any questions. Today, more than ever, this situation sets up both the patient and doctor up to fail at delivering the best care possible. So how do we break this chain, and make your next health care encounter more successful? Here are some easy pointers:

1. Bring a list of your current medications. Better yet, keep a list in your wallet, your purse, on your phone, or in a health folder. Make sure to include the name, the dose, and the number of times per day you take each medication. Frequently, your medications may be keeping you well, making you sick, or both. And some of them may interact with the treatment your doctor is recommending. Knowing exactly what you are taking and how often will help your doctor to take better care of you.

2. Bring a list of your medical conditions with you to every appointment. Again, if your doctor knows what conditions you have, he or she will be better able to care for you. Include medical conditions like diabetes or hypertension, past surgeries you have had, and hospitalizations. If at all possible, add the date that each



condition was first diagnosed or treated.

3. Keep a list of all the doctors and their phone numbers that you see. Your doctor may need to contact one of these other providers for important information about your health to better care for you. And while you may know who you are seeing and why, your doctor may have no idea that you are seeing someone else unless you tell them.

4. Ask questions! The medical world is very complicated and hard to understand, and it's even harder to remember what you were told when you are sick. Please remember that there are no stupid questions – especially when it comes to your health! To assist with this, look for the Ask Me 3 pamphlets at your next visit. This is a program designed to

assist patients get the information they need to be able to take better care of themselves. The three questions you should have answers for when you leave any health care encounter are:

- 1. What is my main problem?**
- 2. What do I need to do?**
- 3. Why is it important for me to do this?**

Updated and readily available information about your medications, your medical conditions, and the doctors you are seeing at the time of any health care encounter will make you a more informed patient, and will help your health care provider take better care of you. And never forget to ask questions! When you leave the office, the ER, or the surgery center, there should be no question as to why you were there, what was done or needs to be done, and why it is important. Taking control of your health is a powerful tool, and will add years to your life, and life to your years!