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# The Health Advisor

By Amanda Diehl

If your health care visits leave you with more confusion than clarity, you are not alone. Most people would like their health information written in plain language and easy to read, and yet medical terminology is often difficult to understand. Thus, it is very important to ask your doctor questions to make sure you know how to live the healthiest life possible.

The process can begin with a list of three simple questions. The Partnership for Clear Health Communication – a team of national health care groups – has set up the **Ask Me 3** program. **Ask Me 3** offers three simple but important questions people ought to ask their healthcare providers during a doctor visit:

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

The following are some strategies that may help you get the kind of answers you need and deserve to better manage your health.

**Bring a Family Member or Friend:** This person can help you take notes and listen to the provider's instructions in case you miss something.

**Speak Up:** Tell your healthcare provider if you do not understand the information they have given you. Ask him or her to repeat the instructions until you know exactly what you need to do. You can also write down specific questions ahead of time so you don't forget to ask during your visit.

**Repeat Instructions:** After the healthcare provider gives you instructions, repeat them to him or her. This is to make sure you have the instructions right.

**Ask for more information:** Don't be shy! Feel free to ask for additional information, such as a hotline or a brochure.

It is very important that you try to fully understand all the medical information that you receive; this way, you can be more proactive in making decisions about your own health as well as your family's health.

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