

Getting the most from your doctor visits



Here are some hints to help you get the most out of each doctor visit.

Write down your questions

Before a doctor visit, write down questions for your doctor. Bring the list with you to your visit. Take notes about what you discuss. Also, think about bringing someone with you to your visit. This person can help you ask questions or take notes.

Discuss your treatment plan

Your treatment plan includes all of the things you need to do to take care of your heart health. This includes your plan for diet and fitness. This plan may include taking medicines for heart problems. You may also take medicines for other health problems, such as diabetes. It is a good idea to talk with your doctor about your treatment plan at every visit.

Be open and honest with your doctor

Talk with your doctor about the medicines you take and how you take them. Let the doctor know what you eat and how active you are. It may help to write these things down first. Then, share your notes with the doctor. Tell your doctor about any concerns you have with your current treatment plan.

During your doctor visit, go over your treatment plan and ask any questions you may have.

Review your medicines as part of your doctor visit

Bring all your medicines in a bag to the doctor's office, including:

- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines (such as anything you take for pain, sleep, colds, or headaches)
- Vitamins and nutritional supplements
- Herbal medicines
- Eye drops
- Inhalers (medicines you use for asthma or allergies)

For each medicine, talk with your doctor and take notes about:

- Why you take it
- When you take it
- How you take it (for example, with meals or on an empty stomach)
- How it may make you feel
- Whether it is OK to take it with your other medicines, including medicines you take for pain, colds, headaches, and more
- Any trouble you are having with taking it as directed

Your heart failure medicines: *What you need to know*



Your heart failure medicines help your heart in many ways

Medicines are a very important part of your heart failure treatment. This guide can help you learn more. It is *not* meant to replace the advice of your doctor. If you have questions or concerns about your medicines or how they make you feel, always talk with your doctor about them.

Keep taking your medicines even when you are feeling better. If you need to stop a medicine, always talk with your doctor first. Many heart failure medicines should not be stopped all at once. Your doctor can work with you to reduce your dose slowly.

Facts about heart failure medicines

Each one works in a different way

You may take one or more medicines every day. Your doctor may prescribe medicine to:

- Help your heart work better
- Help you breathe more easily
- Help you get rid of extra fluid
- Help you feel better
- Help you stay out of the hospital
- Help you live longer

How the medicines may make you feel

Some medicines for heart failure may affect the way you feel. At each doctor visit, be sure to let your doctor know how each medicine makes you feel. You and your doctor can decide what medicines are best for you and how to manage any side effects.

Talk with your doctor about your medicine

Ask these questions so you know how to take your medicine the right way.

1. What is the name of the medicine?
2. How will this medicine help me?
3. At what time of day should I take this medicine?
4. Should I take it with food or without?
5. What should I do if I miss a dose?
6. Are there any other medicines that I should not take with this medicine?

Heart-healthy habits



Your family can help

Making changes to your daily life can help your heart. Sticking to these changes may be easier with the help and support of your family.

Here are some changes that you and your family can make together. Talk with your family about these changes. Then mark the ones you think you want to try.

Eat healthy foods

- Make a heart-healthy grocery list together before you shop (for example, list fresh fruits and vegetables)
- Share a main course when you eat out
- Ask for fruits or flowers for special occasions instead of sweets or alcohol
- Other ideas:



Be active

- Go for a family walk after dinner
- Ask a family member to take an exercise class with you
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Other ideas:

Be sure to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.



Talk with your family

- Bring a family member with you to your doctor visits. He or she can help ask questions and take notes
- Let a family member know what medicines you are taking and at what time. Also, discuss how your doctor told you to take them
- Write down your goals to eat better and become more active. Share them with your family
- Other ideas:



Healthy changes can be good for everyone!

Talk to your doctor about making heart-healthy changes in your daily life.