Honest and thorough communication with your doctor is necessary to ensuring you’re getting the right treatment. The better you are at communicating with your doctor, the more you will be able to get out of the relationship, and the better care you will receive.

Follow these tips to keep the lines of communication open with your doctor:

- **Relax and try not to stress.** While it can be worrisome to have a medical diagnosis, try to focus on the appointment and make the most out of the face-to-face time with your doctor. You will feel better knowing the (often limited!) time you have with your doctor was spent wisely.

- **Ask your doctor if you don’t understand the reason he or she is prescribing a medication or test.** It’s important that you are an educated health consumer, and that means speaking up if you need clarification on what care is being ordered for you. Your doctor will want you to feel comfortable with the treatment plan that is decided on, and if you don’t fully comprehend that plan, that’s not possible.
Statistically, patients that are actively engaged in their treatment decisions, with their providers as partners in their health, have better outcomes. Being a more assertive, informed patient is a great first step toward better health. While your doctor has medical knowledge and experience, you know your body better than anyone else. You should work to establish and maintain a partnership with your doctor. After all, you are there for the same goal— for you to have a healthy life!