

THE SPOTLIGHT

Spotlighting healthcare-related educational topics that matter to you

May 2025



The Patient Education and Empowerment Department creates resources that address a range of topics from medical debt to insurance access and disability benefits. The resources we produce are reflective of real-world experiences that meet the needs of the patients PAF serves.

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Newly Diagnosed and Looking for Support? New Patient Guides Available for You



If you're newly diagnosed with a chronic or critical illness, you'll encounter a lot of information, such as available treatment options or strategies to reduce insurance barriers. As a patient, you will hear medical and clinical terms, which can certainly be overwhelming. PAF has written a new guide, titled **A Patient's Guide to Living with a New Diagnosis** to help make sense of your situation.

To get started, consider these tips when discussing your treatment:

- **Take a moment to process your diagnosis.** It's normal to feel overwhelmed or have a strong emotional reaction. Give yourself time to adjust before trying to absorb all the information.
- **Bring a trusted friend or family member with you to your appointment.** They can ask questions you may not think of, take notes, or even record the conversation (with your provider's permission) for later review.
- **Write down your questions before your provider's visit.** List the most important ones first to ensure they are answered and leave space to write down the answers for future reference.
- **Ask your provider to show you diagrams or drawings that may help increase your understanding.** It's important to understand your treatment plan. If you have any questions, ask to speak with a nurse.
- **Learn more about your treatment team.** Your treatment team may consist of any number of specialists. Remember that your primary care provider is also an important part of your team, so be sure to keep them in the loop.
- **You usually have time to explore different treatment options (including clinical trials) before deciding, as long as your provider hasn't advised immediate action.** Allow yourself time to ask questions, speak with family and friends, or seek a second opinion, without feeling

rushed by your provider. Remember that it's also okay to ask your provider questions about the cost of your care and treatment.

Making informed choices about your care requires having the right information. It can be difficult to know where to start or what questions to ask when faced with a significant health decision. Take it one step at a time, beginning with asking questions about your diagnosis, your treatment plan, and other impacts on your life. To learn what questions to ask, check out our new tip sheet, **A Patient's Guide to Asking the Right Questions and Finding Support.**

