While it can be worrisome to have a medical diagnosis, try to focus on the appointment and making the most out of face-to-face time with your doctor. You will feel better knowing the (often limited!) time you have with your doctor was spent wisely.

If you aren’t honest about your condition, your doctor won’t know the full extent of your symptoms and won’t be able to accurately treat you. Doctors appreciate your honesty and that goes a long way with helping them create a successful treatment plan. As well, sharing information about your health—both emotional and physical—helps to build understanding between you and your doctor.

**RELAX AND TRY NOT TO STRESS**

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**ASK YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND THE REASON HE OR SHE IS PRESCRIBING A MEDICATION OR TEST**

To get the most out of your care requires you to be an educated health consumer. 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.

**TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT SYMPTOMS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING**

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Don't hesitate to tell your doctor you don't understand something they are explaining. Doctors are only human and may not always know when they haven't explained something carefully or have glazed over the parts that may be important to you. You shouldn't feel embarrassed or shy about asking your doctor to explain something more clearly. If you're confused, repeat back what your doctor has said and double-check that you understand it correctly. You can also ask if he or she can provide you specific reading materials about your condition.

A relationship with a doctor is like any relationship, and you need to feel that it's the right one for you. If something about the arrangement doesn't feel right, that's worth paying attention to. After all, your doctor is supposed to be your trusted advocate. If you are unsure about how to find another doctor, give your insurance company a call and they can help with the process of finding someone in your plan's network.

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!