

**Doctors +
Nurses
Knowing
How to
Talk To Us**





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75UJKED9M18&t=1s>

Basic Tips for Doctors and Nurses

- **Slow Down:** Give extra time during appointments so we don't feel rushed.
- **Use Simple Words:** Avoid medical terms. For example, say “**high blood pressure**” instead of “**hypertension.**”
- **One Thing at a Time:** Share information in small steps so it is easier to follow.
- **Use Pictures,** drawings, models, and videos to help us understand. Use more than just words.
- **Check Understanding:** Say things like, “*Tell me in your own words how you will take this medicine.*” Do **not** ask, “*Do you understand?*”
- Talk directly to us, not only to our companion or support worker.
- **Believe Us:** Take our pain or discomfort seriously, even if we communicate in different ways.

Quick "In-the-Moment" Tips for a Consultation

1. **Prepare:** Read any guidelines we gave you about how to talk to us.
2. **Environment:** Minimize distractions. Ensure good lighting.
3. **Greeting:** Introduce yourself and everyone in the room. Explain your role.
4. **Ask:** "What is the best way for us to talk with each other today?"
5. **Use Visuals:** Point to body parts on a diagram or yourself. Use a model of a skeleton.
6. **Be Concrete:** "This cream will help the red patch on your arm feel less itchy," instead of "This is a topical corticosteroid for your dermatitis."
7. **Summarize & Confirm:** At the end, summarize the 1-2 most important points. Use teach-back.

General Tips for People with Disabilities

Talk to Us

Make a plan. Make sure your supporter does NOT answer and instead tells the doctor to talk to you directly. Remind them you might just need more time to process things.

Not every symptom is connected to my disability

Some doctors think every problem is because you have a disability. For example, a doctor once said my stomach pain was anxiety due to autism, but it was really acid reflux. Speak up so you get the same tests as someone without a disability

Speak Up

If you need help explaining, that's okay. Ask for more time especially if you type to communicate. It helps if you see the same doctor each time so they get to know us and our health history.



Patient Rights Guide

Here is a short video to open up our session on communicating with doctors



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgbPFV0i3vA>

Questions to Ask When Scheduling Your Appointment

- ❑ **What will happen during my appointment?**
- ❑ **How can I get the help I need?** For example: “I have trouble getting onto the exam table. Can someone help me?”
- ❑ **Can I get extra time if I need it?**
- ❑ **Is the building, office, exam room, bathroom, and equipment easy for me to use?**
- ❑ **What are my options for transportation and parking?**
- ❑ **Will someone be there to help me when I arrive?**
- ❑ **What forms do I need to fill out?**
 - ❑ Can I fill them out before my visit?
 - ❑ Are the forms available in accessible formats?
 - ❑ Do they give me enough time to fill them out?
- ❑ **How can I keep track of what we talk about?**
 - ❑ Will I get a visit summary in an accessible format?
 - ❑ Can I use a recording device during my appointment?



What to Do Before Your Appointment

- **Write down or record your questions** to ask the doctor. You can even practice what you want to say.
- **Gather your family health history** to share with your doctor.
- **Bring important items**, like your insurance card, a list of your medicines and doses, and contact information for your pharmacy and other doctors.
- **Plan how you will get there**, and if someone is coming with you, make arrangements ahead of time.
- **Check parking and transportation options.** If you're driving, see if there is accessible parking. If taking public transit, look up the route to the office.
- **Bring a notebook or a recorder**, or ask a family member or support person to come with you and take notes.



What to Do During Your Appointment

- **Remind the staff** about any help or accommodations you requested.
- **Ask for changes** if you need them, like recording the visit or using other helpful tools.
- **Speak up** if you're being asked to do something that is hard for you.
- **Be clear and honest** about your health concerns when talking to your doctor.
- **Ask the questions** you wrote down before your visit.
- **Repeat back** what your doctor says in your own words to make sure you understand.
- **Take notes or record new information** about next steps, or have a family member or support person help.



What to Do After Your Appointment

If you still have concerns after your visit, follow up with your doctor's office. You may want to ask about:

- **Getting a visit summary** in a format that's easy for you to read or understand.
- **Any next steps** or follow-up appointments your doctor recommends.
- **How and when to take** any new medicines.

If you feel you weren't treated fairly because of your disability, you can talk to the office manager about it.



Here is a short video to help you out



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kduGimbgEyM&feature=emb_logo

A SELF-ADVOCATE'S GUIDE TO PATIENT RIGHTS



<https://www.ihppvt.org/our-project/patientrights>