

# Tips for Patients and Families



## Ask.Listen.Talk.

### Ask.

Before you meet with your doctor or healthcare provider, write down all of the questions you want to ask.

Ask a friend or family member to go with you when you go to the doctor.

- If you are diagnosed with a condition or need to get a test or treatment, you should ask lots of questions so you fully understand what your problem is and how further tests or treatments will help you.  
Ask your healthcare provider questions such as:
  - Why do I need to do this?
  - What will it involve?
  - Is there anything else I can do to improve my condition?
- Ask questions about medications you are given, such as:
  - How will these medications help me?
  - What are the possible side effects?
  - How and when should I take this medicine?
- When you visit the doctor or any healthcare facility, make sure to wash your hands and don't be afraid to ask your healthcare professional to wash their hands too.
- If you are leaving the hospital, ask what you have to do when you get home. Ask to have a list of your medications to take with you and be sure your family doctor has this information as well.


### Listen.

Listen to everything your healthcare provider tells you. If you do not understand or if you miss anything, ask for it to be repeated or explained until you do understand.

- Your healthcare provider can give you a lot of information at once. Ask a friend or family member to come with you when you talk to your healthcare provider so they can help listen and write down any important information for you.

### Talk.

- It's important to understand your health – discuss any symptoms you've had and make sure your healthcare provider knows the concerns you have.

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- Ensure your doctor knows everything about your health history. If you have any health conditions, such as a heart condition or diabetes, let them know. If an illness or condition runs in your family, talk about this as well.
  - Talk about your medications. Make sure you fully understand why you're taking a medication and how it will improve your health.
  - If something doesn't seem right, don't just think it, say it.

**About the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI):**

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) is a not-for-profit organization that exists to raise awareness and facilitate implementation of ideas and best practices to achieve a transformation in patient safety. Funded by Health Canada, CPSI reflects the desire to close the gap between the healthcare we have and the healthcare we deserve.

Find out more: [www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca](http://www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca) or 1.866.421.6933