



Asking the right questions

Be ready for your doctor's visit



When you see your doctor, there may be a lot of information to take in all at once. It can be helpful to plan ahead and have questions written down to ask your doctor. Then, you'll leave your appointment feeling more confident about what your doctor said and how you should move forward. So make sure you're ready for your next visit.

Before your visit

Whether you're seeing a new doctor, visiting your usual one, or you have some symptoms that are concerning you, it's a good idea to do a few simple things before you go to your appointment.

- **Bring a list of any prescriptions or products you take.** Make a list of everything you take and how much you take each day, from prescription and over-the-counter medicines to vitamins and herbal supplements.
- **Think about bringing a family member or friend.** An extra set of eyes and ears is always helpful when you're talking to your doctor. That person can make sure you ask everything you want to and that you understand what the doctor said.
- **Write down questions you want to ask your doctor.** Once you're at your appointment it can be easy to forget something you wanted to ask. Here are a few suggestions:
 - What can I do to prevent or delay health problems?
 - Should I make any changes to improve my health?
 - Are there tests or screenings I should have, based on my age or other risk factors?
 - Do I need to come back for another visit?

It's important to schedule regular preventive care visits to ask your doctor questions and talk to them about any concerns you have. Plus, most plans cover the cost of preventive care visits like your annual physical.

Need a doctor?

Use the **Sydney** mobile app to find care from the palm of your hand. Or log in to [anthem.com/ca](https://www.anthem.com/ca) to use the **Find a Doctor** tool and search for nearby doctors who are in your plan.



Sources

1 National Institute on Aging website, *What Should I Ask My Doctor During a Checkup?* (accessed December 2019): [nia.nih.gov/health/what-should-i-ask-my-doctor-during-checkup](https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-should-i-ask-my-doctor-during-checkup).

2 Institute for Healthcare Improvement website, *Ask Me 3: Good Questions for Your Good Health* (accessed December 2019): [ihim.org](https://www.ihim.org).

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Preventive care vs. diagnostic care

- You can get preventive care when you're healthy. Things like annual physicals and screenings can help you stay healthy and may prevent health problems before they happen.
- You receive diagnostic care when you're having symptoms of a health problem. Appointments with your doctor and any tests they want you to have are used to diagnose an issue so it can be treated.

Understanding a diagnosis

If you go to the doctor for diagnostic care, make sure you understand your condition and your doctor's plan of care. Here are a few questions you can write down and take with you to a diagnostic appointment:¹

- What's the name of the condition? How do you spell it?
- Why do you think I have this problem? What may have caused it?
- How long will it last?
- How will this problem affect me? What are the long-term effects?
- How can this problem be treated, managed or made better?
- How can I learn more about it?

Visit for more on how to get healthy and stay healthy.

Don't leave until you feel comfortable

If your appointment is ending and you're still unsure what your issue is or what you're supposed to do next, don't leave without asking your doctor these questions:²

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important that I do this?

It's important that you, and anyone else at your appointment, understand what's happening and how to move forward.

