

Accompanying Your Loved One to the Doctor

Care Partner Tool Kit

We have all made it to a doctor's appointment knowing we had questions that we needed to ask yet forgot the most important ones until returning home. As with other parts of being a Care Partner, it is important to prepare for visits to the doctor or hospital. These hints might help you plan for the next appointment.

1. Take all medications with you to the doctor's office. This is easy to do. Simply take photos of each medication bottle. Make sure the name of the medication, dosage and refill information is pictured.
2. Take the name, phone number, and location of the pharmacy.
3. Remember that many doctor's offices are often not at a room temperature that your care partner is comfortable with, so plan to take a sweater or lap blanket to ensure comfort. Also make sure you know where you are going and what parking or drop off is available.
4. Make sure you have a file with the names of all doctors, specialists, visit history and contact information to take with you.
5. Write out your questions before going. Talk with your partner prior to the appointment to help discern their concerns, pain levels, or treatments. Write down any observations you might have made as well.
6. Consider keeping a journal of information from each doctor's visit for easy reference. Include date, reason for visit, instructions from doctor, medication prescribed. Do take pen and paper. Don't assume one doctor knows what another is doing.
7. The doctor will want to know if your partner has a Living Will and a Medical Power of Attorney. These are important documents to have so you are aware of their wishes for care and that when needed you are prepared to make necessary decisions on their behalf. Make sure you know where these are.
8. Repeat back to the doctor any instructions to be sure you understand them completely. This is to include any instructions for medications. Write them down for future reference or ask the doctor if you can record the conversation for playback later for yourself or to share with others on support team.

9. Questions you might want to consider asking:

- a. Is your loved one in danger of falling?
- b. Should they be using any mobility support?
- c. Are there any side effects of medication to be on the watch for?
- d. How will the different medications prescribed interact with each other?
- e. Are there over-the-counter medications that can be used or should be avoided?
- f. Do you and the doctor feel their living arrangements meet their needs?
- g. Are there any travel restrictions?
- h. Should you be aware of any dietary restrictions?
- i. Should there be a follow-up appointment?
- j. What other doctor's or care providers will be contacted and by whom with what information shared?
- k. If hospitalization is recommended, get details of admitting, visitations expectations and what they are hoping to achieve.

10. Remember to keep up with changes in your loved one's condition, especially if hospitalization is involved so that extended family can be kept advised.

11. Remember to keep in mind the spiritual needs of your care partners and consider keeping their church and pastors aware of their needs if appropriate.

Find tips for caregivers managing medical matters at [AARP Caregiver Guides](#).

This Quicksheet is part of the [Care Partner Tool Kit](#) where you can find additional Quicksheets on other Care Partner topics and a Resource Roadmap with websites and books. For additional resources, see the resource library page for the partners in this project [POAMN \(www.poamn.org\)](http://www.poamn.org) and [APCE \(www.apcenet.org\)](http://www.apcenet.org) or the [Office of Christian Formation \(www.pcusa.org/formation\)](http://www.pcusa.org/formation)

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