

Personal Healthcare Checklist

We hope this checklist will help you to feel more prepared and engaged with your healthcare provider.

Before the Appointment

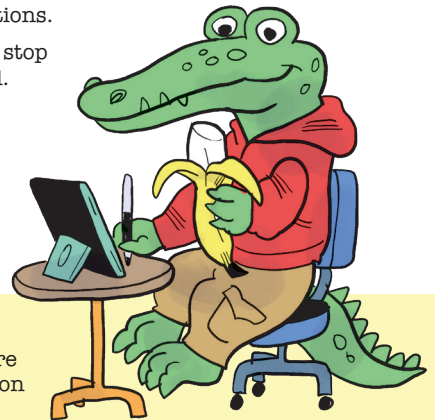
- Make a list of the main questions you would like your healthcare provider to address during the appointment.
- Bring all prescription and over-the-counter medications you are currently taking with you to your appointment (e.g., aspirin or antacids, vitamins, and dietary or herbal supplements).
- Consider making a list of your past and current medical conditions, illnesses, medical procedures, and surgeries to reference in case the healthcare provider asks about your medical history.

During the Appointment

- Explain your symptoms, health history, and any issues with medications you have experienced in the past.
- Communicate with your healthcare provider. Ask questions to make sure you understand their diagnoses and recommendations. Confirm that you feel confident following their instructions.
- If your healthcare provider recommends a test or treatment, ask them about the process, e.g., how it will feel, what you might need to do to prepare, and whether there are other options available to you.
- If you need a prescription, let your healthcare provider know if you are pregnant, are nursing, have reactions to any medications, or if you take vitamins or herbal supplements. Also, ask for the name and spelling of the medication, its purpose, how and when you should take it, what side effects are possible. Also, consider asking if a generic version is available.
- If you require follow-up care in the form of tests, treatments, medications, or more visits, ask your healthcare provider to explain the next steps. You can request written instructions, brochures, videos, websites, a patient hotline number, or other resources that can help you to understand your health needs.

After the Appointment

- Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions.
- Check with your healthcare providers before you stop taking any medications that they have prescribed.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you do not understand or are struggling to follow their instructions, if your symptoms get worse, to request an update on your test results, or to communicate any other concerns about the visit.



This checklist is an abridged version of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) tips for patients. More information can be found at <https://www.ahrq.gov/questions/index.html>. The AHRQ has also joined with Google to help you make a list of questions prior to your visit. This resource can be found at <https://health.google.com/visitplan/?pli=1>.

Privilege Check

Reflecting on your health privilege, check off the statements that apply to you:

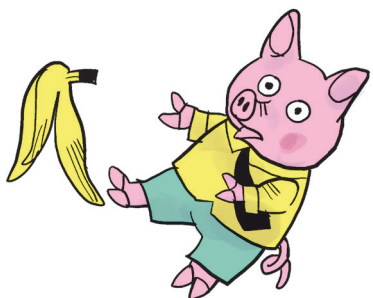
- When I am sick, injured, or unwell, I feel comfortable seeking care from a medical professional and am confident that my health needs will be appropriately and effectively addressed.
- There is a hospital or clinic near my home that I can access by foot, car, or public transportation.
- I have never forgone seeking medical care because of cost or inability to take time away from work, child care, or another responsibility.
- I have never worried that I might be medically mistreated because of my race, gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship status, body size, ability status, or other identity.
- I feel confident that I can carry out my doctor's medical recommendations (e.g., I can afford the costs of my drug prescriptions; I am able to make lifestyle changes to improve my health).
- I am aware of my family medical history and am able to take steps to screen for or prevent developing a hereditary diseases (e.g., Genetic screening for hereditary ovarian cancer).



Each one of these statements constitutes a form of health privilege. Take a moment to think about which statements ring true for you. Perhaps you own a vehicle that can transport you to a nearby clinic. Maybe you have a good employer-based insurance plan that reliably covers the costs of your medical visits. What about the statements that don't apply to you?

Your Scenario

Drawing from your own experience responding to a healthcare crisis, or imagining that you broke a leg, write down the following:



- Who would you call during a healthcare crisis?
- Where would you go for medical support?
- What would you use or borrow in times of medical need? (List an example or two)
- Who are the people or places in your community that uplift those with medical needs?
- Who are the people and places in your community that could use support to help others meet basic survival and medical needs?
- What makes you feel better when you are sick or in pain? What do you do for others when they are sick or in pain?

Cartooning Time

Informed by what you learned in this comic, choose a favorite comic book character and write a story about them seeking healthcare. Next, try to create a short comic book (1-2 pages). If drawing is daunting, use stick figures. Have fun with it! It can be educational, narrative, or comedic! Some details you can consider are layout, headings, captions, characters, dialogue, colors, time, and settings.

When you're done, discuss how writing about the story differed from trying to make the comic. Did you have to cut anything out to fit it into a story? How did writing about a fictional character's healthcare experience differ from writing about your own?

Visit cartoonstudies.org for more information about cartooning classes, graphic guides, and more!