



Working with Your Doctor or Nurse to Get the Right Diagnosis

Take an active role in working with your doctor or nurse when you are ill. To help them put all of this information together to find the right diagnosis (health problem), your doctor or nurse will need to:

- Ask you questions about your current illness and medical history
- Do a physical exam
- Order some tests if needed
- Come up with a list of possible diagnoses that may be causing you to feel ill and narrow it down
- Recommend treatment for your illness

By following this checklist, you become a partner in finding the right diagnosis for you.

Checklist for Getting the Right Diagnosis

Ask questions and get involved

1. **Tell Your Story Well:** Be “Clear”, “Complete”, and “Accurate” when you tell your doctor or nurse about your illness.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Be Clear
Take some time to think about when your symptoms started, what made your symptoms better or worse, or if your symptoms were related to taking medications, eating a meal, exercising, or a certain time of day. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Be Complete
Try to remember all of the important information about your illness. Write down some notes and bring them with you, a family member may be able to help you with this. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Be Accurate
Sometimes a nurse or health technician may ask you questions about your illness before you see the doctor. Make sure your doctor hears the same story. |

2. **Be A Good Historian:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Remember what treatments you have tried in the past and if they helped
<input type="checkbox"/>	Think about how your illness has progressed over time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Think about your family's medical history and if you may be at risk to get the same illness
3. <u>Be A Good Record Keeper:</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep your own records of test results, referrals, and hospital admissions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep an accurate list of your medications
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bring your medication list with you when you see your doctor, nurse or pharmacist
4. <u>Be An Informed Consumer:</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about your illness by looking on the Internet (www.medlineplus.gov) or visit a local library.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about the tests or procedures you are having done
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about your medications:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know the name of your medication (both generic and brand names) For Example: Tylenol (brand name) and Acetaminophen (generic name)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know what the medication is for
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know the amount (dose) you need to take
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know the time you need to take it during the day
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know the side effects to watch for and report to your doctor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know if the medication interacts with any food or drugs
5. <u>Take Charge of Managing Your Health:</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	When meeting with your doctor or nurse, use the Ask Me 3 brochure titled Good Questions for Getting the Right Diagnosis
<input type="checkbox"/>	If you have more than one doctor, make sure each doctor knows what the other person is thinking and planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure each doctor knows all of your test results, medications, or other treatments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be informed and involved in decisions about your health

6. Know Your Test Results:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure both you and your doctor get the results from any tests that are done
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't assume that no news is good news, call and check on your test results
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask what the test results mean and what needs to be done next

7. Follow Up:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask when you need to make another appointment (follow up) with your doctor or nurse once you start treatment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask what to expect from the treatment or what it will do for you
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask what you need to do if you get new symptoms, or start to feel worse

8. Make Sure It Is The Right Diagnosis:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes your diagnosis is the most "likely" thing that is wrong, but it may not be the "right" thing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't be afraid to ask "What else could this be?"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage your doctor or nurse to think about other possible reasons for your illness