

# You're the most important part

## Put yourself at the centre of your healthcare

Have you ever felt confused or overwhelmed after a healthcare appointment? Here are some tips to help.

### Your role as a patient

Take an active role in your healthcare by partnering with your healthcare team. This could mean planning for your healthcare visits, discussing and understanding your treatment options, making informed decisions, participating in shared decision-making, and more.

*"The more patients are engaged in their healthcare, the more effective and accurate their medical care becomes."*

– Dr. Dhaliwal, family doctor in Calgary



### Make the most of your visit with your healthcare team

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you visit your healthcare team, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and more.

#### Before Your Visit:

- Write down your questions, symptoms, and concerns. If your list is long, you may need to prioritize what you want to discuss or book another appointment

**Tip:** Call your clinic in advance and let them know if you may need some extra time or additional appointments.

- List all your medications and dosage - if you're not sure, ask your pharmacist for a list
- Ask a family member or friend to go with you (be sure to ask your clinic about current public health restrictions)

#### During Your Visit:

- Make sure you understand the treatment options and the advantages and disadvantages of each
- Don't hesitate to ask questions – you can ask for more information or resources about your concerns, medications, or treatment options
- Write down the instructions you're given before you leave. You can also record your conversation with the permission of your healthcare team

#### After Your Visit:

- Book appointments at the lab or other offices as soon as possible and confirm when the results will be sent to your healthcare team
- Call back if you have any concerns, your symptoms get worse, you have problems with your medicine, or you want to clarify anything else

## Tips for managing your medications

1. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what each medication does and how to use it
2. Ask which activities, foods, prescription/non-prescription medications, and herbal remedies to avoid with your medications
3. Get help right away if you think you're experiencing side effects or adverse reactions to your medications. Note: call 9-1-1 if you are having difficulty breathing or have other life-threatening symptoms. Otherwise, you can contact Health Link at 8-1-1 for assistance in deciding where and when to get help with side effects or adverse reactions



### Let your healthcare team know if you don't understand something

Be open and honest. You could say, "This is new to me. Would you mind explaining it slowly, using language that is easier to understand?" or "Can you show me a picture or model to help me understand?"

Medical terms can be technical and hard to understand. Ask for explanations and examples to ensure you fully understand them.

## Receive healthcare in your preferred language

If you'd like to find a family doctor who speaks your language, visit [albertafindadoctor.ca](http://albertafindadoctor.ca) or ask a family member or friend to assist you using that website.

In Alberta Health Services facilities (hospitals and community health centres), you can advise your healthcare team that you require interpretation.

You can also print a language card from the AHS website (or ask someone to do this for you). This card says, in English, that you require translation in your preferred language.

You can show this card to healthcare providers when needed. Alternatively, you can ask someone write this message on a card that you keep with you. Learn more at

[albertahealthservices.ca/languages/languages.aspx](http://albertahealthservices.ca/languages/languages.aspx)

To speak with a nurse for health advice or information in your preferred language, call Health Link 24/7 by dialing 8-1-1.

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## How to find a family doctor or walk-in clinic

If you need a family doctor, visit [albertafindadoctor.ca](http://albertafindadoctor.ca) or ask a family member or friend to help you find a doctor or walk-in clinic using that website.

**For more tips, visit: [hqca.ca/mycommunity](http://hqca.ca/mycommunity)**

**Watch the YouTube video in your language [bit.ly/3bYDhDn](https://bit.ly/3bYDhDn)**