

Checklist/Worksheet
Communicating with the Doctor and Health Care Providers

- Complete this worksheet with 'permanent' information such as allergies, medical history.
- Make copies and list information and questions for each doctor visit.
- Take the completed worksheet to the doctor's office and offer a copy to the office staff to put with the chart for the physician.
- Use it to report to the health care professionals.
- Take notes on this worksheet during doctor visits.

What to bring to the doctor

	Need to do or Completed
1. List all the symptoms that have been experienced/reported. <i>How long do they last and how frequent are they?</i>	
2. List all recent significant illness. <i>(Over the past 2-3 years)</i>	
3. List any allergic reactions and sources.	
4. List all drugs that are being used. <i>Include prescription, over-the-counter drugs (i.e., aspirin, ibuprofen, laxatives, sedatives, etc.), vitamins, and herbal remedies.</i>	
5. List other health care professionals who are providing treatment, what they are treating, and how, if applicable. <i>Examples: chiropractor, physical therapist.</i>	

What to ask from the doctor

6. Information about what the problem appears to be. <i>A description is more important than a diagnostic name.</i>	
7. A list of any medications that should be taken, as explanation of why, and what effect they should have. <i>Ask for a generic form of the medication, if it is safe and available.</i>	

<p>8. Information about when to take the medication, how much, and how long. <i>Pharmacies now include an insert or printout with all medications.</i></p>	
<p>9. Information about the side effects of each medicine or interaction with other medications.</p>	
<p>10. List any changes in diet or lifestyle. <i>Should medications be taken before a meal, before retiring, or with food? Exercise and diet changes?</i></p>	
<p>11. An appointment for a follow-up visit or phone check-up, not more than one week from the visit. <i>A follow-up is very important. The medicine may be too strong or may have harmful side effects: The effects of medications and various dosages are unpredictable with an older patient.</i></p> <p>Time: Date:</p>	
<p>Other helpful hints ✓ Use your pharmacist as another resource person to explain more information about drugs and drug combinations.</p> <p>✓ Ask the pharmacist to give regular capped bottles rather than childproof, hard to open bottles. ✓ Make sure the person can afford the medicine. <i>Generic drugs cost less.</i> ✓ Do not substitute medication with another person's prescription. <i>Differences in dosage strengths may be very harmful.</i> ✓ If there are any adverse reactions from the medications, call the doctor immediately. <i>Don't pretend that you know what to do.</i></p>	
<p>Other discussion items or questions</p>	

Adapted from *As People Grow Older*, Jane Oderberg and Sue Smith, 1995 and National Family Caregivers Association