

Do you know that feeling when a conversation is over and you suddenly think of everything you wish you had said? We've all been there, and we want to help you avoid that feeling during your healthcare appointments. If no one has ever suggested it before, you can practice for your appointments. Think of this as your starting point. Here are a few talking points and questions based on various scenarios to get you started so you can walk in with more confidence and walk out with answers, feeling heard and seen.

APPOINTMENT SCRIPTS

OPENING THE APPOINTMENT

- I have [number] things I want to discuss today. I want to make sure we have time to cover all of them.
- Before we get started, I want to make sure my main concern is addressed today; it's [concern].
- I've been preparing for this appointment, and I have some specific questions I'd like answered today.
- I want to make the most of our time today. Can we start with my biggest concern first?
- I brought some notes so I don't forget anything, and I will be referring to them during our visit.

DESCRIBING YOUR SYMPTOMS

- This has been affecting my daily life in [specific ways] for [duration].
- It started [when], is located at [where], and feels like [burning/tingling/pressure/etc].
- On a scale of 1–10, my pain is a [number]. It gets [better/worse] when [factor].
- This is not normal for my body. I know something is off.
- I've been tracking my symptoms, and I noticed a pattern. It tends to happen [when].
- This is affecting my ability to [work/sleep/care for my family/exercise/etc.], and I need it to be addressed.

PLANNING NEXT STEPS

- What do you think is causing this, and how confident are you in that?
- What are my treatment options, and what do you recommend and—why?
- What should I be watching for at home, and when should I call if things get worse?
- Should I be seeing a specialist? Who would you recommend?
- What does this diagnosis mean for my long-term health?

MEDICATION CONVERSATIONS

- What is this medication for, and what are the side effects I should know about?
- Are there any alternatives to this medication?
- How will we know if this medication is working?
- How long will I need to take this medication?
- Are there any interactions with medications or supplements I'm already taking?
- Are there any foods, drinks, supplements, and/or medications I should avoid while taking this?

CLOSING THE APPOINTMENT

- Before I leave, can you summarize what we decided on today?
- When should I follow up, and what symptoms or changes should prompt me to come back sooner?
- Is there anything else you think I should know?
- Can I get a copy of my visit summary, notes, and/or test results?
- Who should I contact if I have questions after I leave today?
- I want to make sure I understood everything correctly. Let me repeat back what I heard.
- What are the next steps if my symptoms don't improve?