

Make the Most of Your Medical Appointment: Appointment Follow-through Guide



After you meet with your doctor, following any instructions you may have been given will help keep your health on track. You may need to fill a prescription, make other appointments, or get lab work or other kinds of tests. Following through is important.¹

This brochure provides tips to help you take action after a medical appointment.



Follow through...Take action on the next steps

Follow the instructions that you discussed with your doctor or health care professional.¹

If you are unclear about something or have additional questions¹:

- Call your health care professional
- Check back and read any notes you took during your visit

Not sure when you should consider calling your doctor or other health care professional? You should call if¹:

- You experience any side effects or other problems with your medicines
- Your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor
- You receive any new prescriptions or start taking any over-the-counter medicines
- You need the results of any tests you've had
- You need to ask about test results you do not understand



Follow through...Fill your prescription

Try to use one pharmacy to fill your prescriptions. This will help your pharmacist know about all the medicines you take so he or she can be sure that they are safe to take together.^{1,2}

Questions to ask about your medicines²:

- What is the name of the medicine and why am I taking it?
- What medical condition does this medicine treat?
- How many times a day should I take it? At what time(s)? If the bottle says take “4 times a day,” does that mean 4 times in 24 hours or 4 times during the daytime?
- How much medicine should I take?
- Should I take the medicine with food or not? Is there anything I should not eat or drink when taking this medicine?
- How long will this medicine take to work?
- Will this medicine cause problems if I am taking other medicines?
- Is it safe for me to drive while taking this medication?
- What does “as needed” mean?
- When should I stop taking the medicine?
- If I forget to take my medicine, what should I do?
- What side effects can I expect? What should I do if I have a problem?
- Will I need a refill? How do I arrange that?

When you have a prescription filled²:

- Tell the pharmacist if you have trouble swallowing pills
 - There may be liquid medicine available. Do not chew, break, or crush tablets without first finding out if the drug will still work
- Make sure you can read and understand the name of the medicine
 - Also make sure you understand the directions on the container and on the color-coded warning stickers. If the label is hard to read, ask your pharmacist to use larger type
- Check that you can open the container
 - If not, ask the pharmacist to put your medicines in bottles that are easier to open
- Ask about special instructions on where to store a medicine
 - For example, should it be kept in the refrigerator or in a dry place?
- Check the label on your medicine before leaving the pharmacy
 - It should have your name on it and the directions given by your doctor. If it doesn't, don't take it, and talk with the pharmacist

