



National Patient
Advocate Foundation

HOW TO MAKE SHARED DECISIONS

CHOOSE YOUR DOCTOR CAREFULLY

Your relationship with your doctor is important. Make sure you choose someone you can talk to comfortably and who listens to you.

PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Write down important questions or issues. Think in terms of “what,” “where” and “how much.” For instance, “my knee hurts” is a good start, but “I get sharp pains when I go up the stairs,” is better. Include how any issues affect your quality of life or ability to perform everyday tasks.

BRING AN ADVOCATE

Take someone with you to important appointments to help you understand your options and make decisions. Your advocate doesn't need to be a professional; a family member, friend or neighbor could work! Choose someone who is diplomatic, can take good notes and who can share what you've been going through.

USE RELIABLE SOURCES

When researching your diagnosis, use reliable sources. This helps you to ask questions that matter. Make sure you get that information from reliable sources.

BE HONEST WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Be upfront about what is going on in your life and what matters to you. Don't exaggerate your adherence to your treatment plan. Your doctor can use this information to craft a treatment plan that works for you.

TALK ABOUT COSTS

Tell the doctor if you are concerned about the costs of your care or cannot afford the treatments or medications he/she recommends.

ASK ONCE, ASK TWICE

Ask your doctor any questions you have. Then, clarify anything that isn't perfectly clear to you. Try this script: “I asked THIS, and I heard you say THIS...is that correct?”

GET TO KNOW THE FULL TEAM

Take advantage of nurses, nurse practitioners and social workers. They often have more time to spend with you and are excellent sources of information and support.

For more information, visit us at
WWW.NPAF.ORG