



GOOD QUESTIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Presentation Notes, Activity, Take-Home Handout, and Evaluation

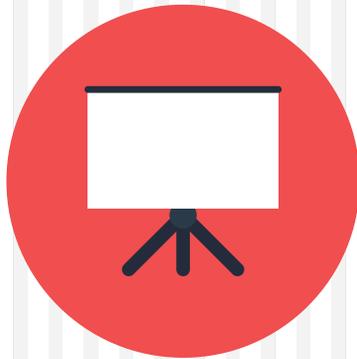


**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
Office of the Associate
Director for Communication



GOOD QUESTIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Presentation Notes





Slide 1

- “ **Speaker Notes:** We’re going to talk today about how to improve communication with doctors, nurses, dentists and pharmacists and make sure we understand the important information they tell us. Have any of you ever wanted to ask your doctor a question, but weren’t sure how to bring it up? Did any of you bring questions with you today?

Slide 2

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Please look at these pictures and tell me what you think is happening.
- Ask participants what they feel is happening in the pictures and invite discussion.

Slide 3

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Have you ever seen a label like this? What are the possible side effects of this medicine? It may not be clear at first. Notice how you really have to pay attention to the label in order to identify a side effect from the drug.
- Potential answers to the question “What are the possible side effects of this medicine” include drowsiness, excitability, driving impairment

Slide 4

- Read from slide and invite discussion.

Slide 5

- “ **Speaker Notes:** If you have experienced any of these two examples, at the doctor’s office or reading a label, you are not alone. Many people have a hard time getting and understanding the health information they need.
- A major reason people have a hard time with health information is that it is often complex. A lot of health information involves unfamiliar words and lots of numbers. In addition, short visits with doctors, nurses and pharmacists make it difficult to get answers to all your questions.
- Finding, understanding, and talking about health information is necessary to make sense of today’s complex healthcare system and maintain good health.
- During today’s workshop, we will discuss one way to make using the healthcare system a little easier to use. That technique is based on building a relationship with your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists by asking the right questions and engaging them in your care.
- After today’s workshop, I hope you leave here better informed and ready to ask questions, and encourage other people in your life to become more active about their health.



Slide 6

- “ **Speaker Notes:** In too many of our medical visits, doctors and nurses are not very clear when describing health information to patients.
- In fact, only 1 in 10 Americans can really make sense of and use health information, like instructions you get when you leave the hospital.
 - ✓ Research and Resources: 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy study (National Assessment of Adult Literacy)
 - The problem goes beyond just not understanding information. Researchers now know that when people actively get involved during doctor visits, they are more likely to be satisfied, follow recommendations, and get better results.
 - Also, people are more likely to manage their ongoing diseases, read labels correctly, take their medicine according to the directions, get care that prevents health problems, use the emergency room less and be hospitalized less than people who aren't as involved in their health.
 - So, people who ask their doctors and nurses questions and take an active role are happier with their care and see more improvement in their health than people who don't.

Slide 7

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Today, we will talk about:
- ✓ How to find and understand health information
 - ✓ Some simple techniques to make sure we better understand the information we get
 - ✓ We'll also do a brief activity

Slide 8

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Let's look at results from a 2012 survey asking U.S. adults "Where did you turn to for health information the last time you had a serious health issue?" Notice that other people such as health professionals and friends and family are common sources of information. And, as you may expect, the Internet is increasingly a source of health information for many people. But even when people find health information on the Internet, they often talk with people around them about what they find.
- ✓ Research and Resources : Pew Research Center Family Caregivers and Health Care Info

Slide 9

- “ **Speaker Notes:** How many of you have used information from sources like Google, Web MD, or other online sources to find health information? (invite discussion about their experiences)



- People turn to other people to help them interpret, discuss and develop meaning from the information they find online. Specifically, 2 out of 3 “e-patients” talk with someone else about what they find online, most often a friend or spouse.
- Not everyone looks for information just for themselves. Half of all online health searches (52%) are for someone other than the person doing the search. Some of you may have children, parents, or older relatives or friends who rely on you to help them with health questions or problems. We may feel confident that we can get what we need from our complex healthcare system, but the people we care for may need extra support.
- How many of you have ever gone to a doctor’s appointment with a loved one? How many of you have shared health information with friends or family?
- Invite discussion
 - ✓ Research and Resources: The Social Life of Health Information

Slide 10

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Even though communication technologies, like the Internet, continue to change and increase our access to health information, doctors, nurses, and pharmacists continue to be the number one source of trusted health information. A good relationship between a patient and doctor can have a tremendous positive impact on your health.
- Let’s think about the doctor-patient relationship. On one side, you have the patient – that’s you or the person you’re caring for. No one knows you better than yourself! You know best what you eat, how much you exercise, and what medicines you take. Also, you are probably the one with greatest self-interest in trying to be healthy. On the other side is the doctor, or the nurse, or the pharmacist. They have years of education, experience and want you to be healthy. However, they are busy, see many patients and can only spend a limited amount of time with each person. There are things you can do to help your doctor do her job and maximize your understanding and chances of getting the help you want.
- Take, for example, medicine instructions. When a doctor prescribes medicine and you have to take it on your own at home (maybe you have a caregiver to help), you’re the one who has to make sure you take the medicine according to the directions. You or the caregiver also are responsible for reporting bad reactions, issues of cost, or confusing instructions to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can help yourself by asking questions ahead of time and knowing who to contact if you have more questions so that you’re prepared when it’s time to take the medicine.

Slide 11

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Your questions help your doctor and health care team learn more about you. Your doctor’s answers can help you make better decisions, receive better care, avoid medical mistakes, and feel better about your health care. Your questions can also lead to better results for your health.



Slide 12

“ **Speaker Notes:** Now, let’s watch a clip that discusses the importance of asking your doctor questions. The story is from the client’s point of view.

- Invite discussion.

Slide 13

“ **Speaker Notes:** We heard from the client’s point of view. Now we will watch a clip that has the doctor’s point of view.

- Invite discussion.

Slide 14

“ **Speaker Notes:** Asking questions about your diagnoses, treatments, and medicines can improve the quality, safety, and results of your health care.

- Taking steps before your medical appointments will help you to make the most of your time with your doctor and health care team.
- Time is limited during doctor visits. Prepare for your appointment by thinking about what you want to do during your next visit.
- Do you want to:
 - ✓ Talk about a health problem?
 - ✓ Get or change a medicine?
 - ✓ Get medical tests?
 - ✓ Talk about surgery or treatment options?
- Write down your questions to bring to your appointment. The answers can help you make better decisions, get good care, and feel better about your health care.

Slide 15

“ **Speaker Notes:** It is very important to understand the plan or next steps that your doctor recommends.

- During your appointment, make sure to ask the questions you prepared before your appointment. Start by asking the ones that are most important to you.
- To get the most from your visit, tell the nurse or person at the front desk that you have questions for your doctor. If your doctor does not ask you if you have questions, ask your doctor when the best time would be to ask them.



- The questions you may want to ask will depend on whether your doctor gives you a diagnosis; recommends a treatment, medical test, or surgery; or gives you a prescription for medicine.
 - ✓ Questions to ask if your doctor gives you a diagnosis:
 - ✓ What is my diagnosis?
 - ✓ What are my treatment options?
 - ✓ What are the benefits of each option?
 - ✓ What are risks and side effects?
 - ✓ Questions to ask if your doctor recommends a test or medicine:
 - ✓ What is the test for?
 - ✓ What happens during the test?
 - ✓ Are there risks associated with this test?
 - ✓ What will the results tell me?
 - ✓ What will the medicine you are prescribing do?
 - ✓ How do I take it?
 - ✓ What side effects am I most likely to have?
 - ✓ What do I do if the medicine causes problems or doesn't seem to work?
- Other Questions:
 - ✓ Do I need to change my daily routine?
- Surgery:
 - ✓ Why do I need surgery?
 - ✓ Are there other ways to treat my condition?
 - ✓ How often do you perform this surgery?
 - ✓ How might I feel after the surgery?
 - ✓ What will I be able to do or not do after the surgery?

Slide 16

- “ **Speaker Notes:** After you meet with your doctor, you will need to follow his or her instructions to keep your health on track.



- Your doctor may have you fill a prescription or make another appointment for tests, lab work, or a follow-up visit. It is important for you to follow your doctor’s instructions.
- It also is important to call your doctor if you are unclear about any instructions or have more questions. Pharmacists can answer questions about your medicines too.
- Prioritize your questions, create a list of follow-up questions to ask, and call your doctor if appropriate.
- Call your doctor:
 - ✓ If you experience any side effects or other problems with your medicines.
 - ✓ If your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor.
 - ✓ If you receive any new prescriptions or start taking any over-the-counter medicines.
 - ✓ To get results of any tests you’ve had. Don’t assume that no news is good news.
 - ✓ To ask about test results you do not understand.

Slide 17

- “ **Speaker Notes:** Be prepared for your next medical appointment by creating a list of questions that you can take with you to
 - ✓ Get a checkup
 - ✓ Talk about a problem or health condition
 - ✓ Get a prescription
 - ✓ Discuss a medical test or surgery
- Whatever the reason for your visit, it is important to be prepared.

Slide 18

- “ **Speaker Notes:** If you are unsure which questions to ask or would like to know what the best questions are, try going to this Question Builder online. Let’s take a look: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- It is important to bring your questions with you. Your doctor may be more open to you asking questions if she sees that you have already prepared them.

Slide 19

- “ **Speaker Notes:** You should ask your questions anytime you meet with your doctor, nurse, dentist, pharmacist, or mental health professionals such as your psychologist, psychiatrist, or counselor.
- Also, it is important to ask questions whenever you receive a medical exam or lab test results.



Slide 20

“ **Speaker Notes:** Preparing questions in advanced is a great idea. Here are some helpful tips to prepare for your next appointment.

1. Create a health history that includes your current conditions and past surgeries or illnesses. Bring it to your appointment
2. Know your family's health history, such as your parents' health conditions
3. Bring all your medicines with you
4. Call your doctor's office to find out test results. Remember, no news doesn't necessarily mean good news!

Slide 21

“ **Speaker Notes:** Now, we will complete an activity. Please divide into groups of two or three. One group member will read a script playing the role as the doctor while the other group member listens and creates questions. The patient will be provided a gist of their symptoms and must prepare questions to ask before their hypothetical doctor's visit. Then, the patient will listen to the doctor's diagnosis and write down the necessary questions to fully understand their condition and next steps.

➤ Distribute handouts of the “Activity” and provide pens/pencils if necessary.

Slide 22

➤ Use the slide to guide a discussion of the activity once participants have finished.

➤ Possible responses to the first part of the activity are:

- ✓ What is the test for?
- ✓ How is the test done?
- ✓ How accurate is the test?
- ✓ Is this test the only way to find out that information?
- ✓ What do I need to do to prepare for the test?
- ✓ When will I get the results?
- ✓ What will the results tell me?
- ✓ What's the next step after the test?

➤ Possible responses to the second part of the activity are:

- ✓ What is my diagnosis?



- ✓ Will I need any more tests?
- ✓ How much does this treatment cost?
- ✓ Are there any side effects?
- ✓ What happens if I choose to not have treatment?
- ✓ What is the outlook for my future?

Slide 23

“ **Speaker Notes:** Now we are going to watch another brief video reaffirming the importance of patients asking good questions. A nurse practitioner shares a story from her own practice and encourages patients to come prepared, have their list of questions, and communicate with their providers.

Slide 24

“ **Speaker Notes:** On the same sheet you have for the last activity, please write down problems you might have when trying to ask your doctor questions and ways you can overcome those problems. Also, consider your loved ones who may have these same problems and how they can work through these to make sure their health needs are truly met.

- Use the suggested list of questions on the slide to guide discussion.

Slide 25

“ **Speaker Notes:** To wrap up, let’s review several important points:

1. Your questions help your doctor and health care team learn more about you.
 2. Your doctor’s answers to your questions can help you make better decisions, receive better care, avoid medical mistakes, and feel better about your health care.
 3. Your questions can also lead to better results for your health.
- It is very important that you ask your doctor questions as well as realize that your doctor is there for you. Essentially, they have a duty to serve you. Try using the techniques we’ve talked about today at your next medical visit.

Adapted from the University of Georgia’s Health Literacy on Wheels project materials.



GOOD QUESTIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Activity





Background

The patient is going to see their doctor because they are having pains in their chest and near their throat. This has been going on for the last month and is disrupting the patient’s sleep. The patient is worried these chest pains may be indicative of heart problems. The nurse scheduling her appointment tells her to prepare for an EKG test.

Before the Appointment

- **Instructions to the Patient:** Write down some questions that you could ask before the appointment.

At the Appointment

- **Doctor:** Well, the nurse showed me the EKG she ran and I couldn’t see anything bad going on in it. You say you had those chest pains and up into your throat all the while you were wired up to the machine...the EKG was totally normal.

Actually, I’m glad you had those pains right here in the office, because I can tell you that whatever it is, it’s no heart attack. I’ll tell you, from what you said about those pains, I’m about 80% sure that you have G.E.R.D. I’m going to write you a prescription for this medicine that you’re going to take in the mornings. I’ll want to see you back here again in one month to check you again. Anything else you wanted to talk to me about today?

- **Instructions to the Patient:** Write down some questions that you would ask the doctor during the appointment.

Adapted from the University of Georgia’s Health Literacy on Wheels project materials.



GOOD QUESTIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Take-Home Handout





Your questions help your doctor and health care team learn more about you. Your doctor's answers to your questions can help you make better decisions, receive a higher level of care, avoid medical harm, and feel better about your health care. Your questions can also lead to better results for your health.

Before Your Appointment

Time is limited during doctor visits. Prepare for your appointment by thinking about what you want to do during your next visit.

Do you want to:

- ✓ Talk about a health problem?
- ✓ Get or change a medicine?
- ✓ Get medical tests?
- ✓ Talk about surgery or treatment options?

Write down your questions to bring to your appointment. The answers can help you make better decisions, get good care, and feel better about your health care.

During Your Appointment

The questions you may want to ask during your appointment will depend on whether your doctor gives you a diagnosis; recommends a treatment, medical test, or surgery; or gives you a prescription for medicine.

Questions could include:

- ✓ What is my diagnosis?
- ✓ What are my treatment options? What are the benefits of each option? What are the side effects?
- ✓ Will I need a test? What is the test for? Are there risks associated with this test? What will the results tell me?
- ✓ What will the medicine you are prescribing do? How do I take it? Are there any side effects?
- ✓ Why do I need surgery? Are there other ways to treat my condition? How often do you perform this surgery?
- ✓ Do I need to change my daily routine?



After Your Appointment

After you meet with your doctor, you will need to follow his or her instructions to keep your health on track.

Your doctor may have you fill a prescription or make another appointment for tests, lab work, or a follow-up visit. It is important for you to follow your doctor's instructions. It also is important to call your doctor if you are unclear about any instructions or have more questions.

Other times to call your doctor

There are other times when you should follow up on your care and call your doctor. Call your doctor:

- ✓ If you experience any side effects or other problems with your medicines.
- ✓ If your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor.
- ✓ If you receive any new prescriptions or start taking any over-the-counter medicines.
- ✓ To get results of any tests you've had. Do not assume that no news is good news.
- ✓ To ask about test results you do not understand.

Adapted from Questions are the Answer, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/patient-involvement/ask-your-doctor/index.html>



GOOD QUESTIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH Evaluation





We would like to learn how valuable you feel this workshop has been to you. Please circle your response under each question below.

1. How important do you think it is to ask your health provider questions?

Not at all important Somewhat important Important Very important

2. How helpful are the techniques you learned in this workshop?

Not at all helpful Just a little helpful Helpful Very helpful

3. How likely are you to use the question-asking techniques you learned today at your next medical appointment?

Not at all likely Somewhat likely Likely Very likely

4. How likely are you to share what you learned today with others, such as family members, friends, neighbors or co-workers?

Not at all likely Somewhat likely Likely Very likely

5. How important do you think it is to have this workshop shared in places like community groups, places of worship, and parent-teacher associations?

Not at all important Somewhat important Important Very important

6. How interested are you in leading your own workshop?

Not at all interested Somewhat interested Interested Very interested

7. In your own words, what did you get out of the Good Questions for Good Health workshop?

8. How could this workshop be improved?

9. What else would you like to tell us about your experience today?
