

Making the Most of Your Visit to the Doctor

TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE BEFORE YOUR VISIT:

Think about your main health concern

Write down a few notes about your symptoms (for instance, when they occur; how long you've been experiencing them; their severity; etc). Then write a **one-minute description** of your concerns. Don't forget to include any treatments you have already tried. **Write down specific questions** you have for the doctor.



Keep a symptom diary

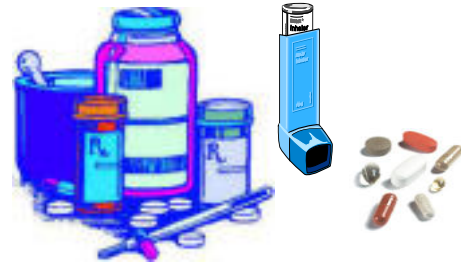
Every time you experience a symptom, **write it down**: When do they occur? What makes them stop? Are your moods connected to your symptoms? If you experience pain, how long does that last? Is it a sharp pain or a dull one? How frequent are the episodes?



Gather your medical history and key reports

Everyone should have an up-to-date medical file at home. This file should include your personal medical history, vaccination history, drugs prescribed, any adverse reactions, any allergies,

PFT results, history and physical exam results, key lab reports, etc. This is very important information to have in an emergency situation where you may need to see a new doctor.



Bring your meds or list of meds

Put all your medications and supplements in a bag, and bring them with you so your doctor gets a complete picture of what you're taking (don't forget over-the-counter products, vitamins, herbs, and other supplements).

TIPS ON WHAT TO DO DURING YOUR VISIT:

Don't waste time: **Get to the point** of why you're there by using the notes you prepared in advance.

Be clear: Answer your doctor's questions truthfully and talk about your feelings. It does neither of you any good if you are not honest. It is difficult for your physician to make a complete diagnosis without all the correct information.


Ask questions: If you're unclear about anything, ask. And keep asking until you fully understand. Ask about any tests. Ask about prescribed medications. Ask about when you will feel better. Ask what side effects warrant a call to the doctor.




Take notes: It's best if the patient pays full attention to the doctor. If possible, bring a friend or a family member to take notes. **Before you leave, get it in writing!**

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CTS fact sheets are developed to inform the lay public on topics of lung health. They should not be considered a substitute for personal medical opinion from a health care provider.


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or  **download ALA public and patient items at www.lungusa.org**

 *Visit the ALA of California website for state activities & advocacy issues at www.CaliforniaLung.org*

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