



Making the Most of Your Appointment

More and more patients are playing a proactive role in their treatment and healthcare plan. We at Monroe Clinic see patients not only as recipients of care, but as integral members of their healthcare team. In order to achieve the best outcome for your health, here are some useful tips to help you during your clinic visit.

Questions to ask

Take with you a list of questions or issues that you wish to discuss. Some examples might include:

- What is my diagnosis?
- What caused my condition?
- How will this condition affect my health now and in the future?
- Should I watch for any particular symptoms and notify you if they occur?
- Should I make any lifestyle changes?
- About your treatment:
 - What is the treatment for my condition?
 - When will the treatment start, and how long will it last?
 - What are the benefits of this treatment, and how successful is it?
 - What are the risks and side effects associated with this treatment?
 - Are there foods, drugs, or activities I should avoid while I'm on this treatment?
- If my treatment includes taking a medication, what should I do if I miss a dose?
- Who should I contact in an emergency or if I am worried?
- Are other treatments available?
- About your tests:
 - What kinds of tests will I have?
 - What do you expect to find out from these tests?
 - When will I know the results?
 - Do I have to do anything special to prepare for any of the tests?
 - Do these tests have any side effects or risks?
 - Will I need more tests later?

Effective Communication

Understanding your doctor's responses is essential to good communication. If

you don't understand your doctor's responses, don't be embarrassed to let him or her know and keep asking questions until you do understand. Take notes, or get a friend or family member to take notes for you, and ask your doctor to write down his or her instructions to you. You can check with your doctors to see if there is any printed material available about your condition.

Knowing Your History

During a clinic visit, your provider will inquire about your condition, such as symptom history, other problems you may have, which medications you are taking, and whether other family members have the same problem. To help your physician provide you with the best possible care, it's important that you can provide him or her with the most accurate, up-to-date information. That's why it's a good idea to prepare answers to these questions ahead of time.

The basic list of information that doctors seek to know about their patient is as follows:

- Current Illness: What is the major problem(s) affecting you?
- History of present illness: What are your symptoms? When did they start? How have they progressed, what makes them better or worse?
- Past medical history: Do you have any other medical problems? Have there been medical problems in the past? Which medications do you take, and do you have any known medication allergies?
- Family history: Are there any other family members with similar symptoms, other neurological disorders, or other major medical disorders?