

Take Charge of Your Health

Self-advocate at the Doctor

Many individuals struggle to get the health care they deserve. Advocating for yourself can help your health care provider understand your needs and expectations. It involves taking action to ensure you get the necessary time and attention from your doctor. Self-advocacy takes practice and is critical to increasing your health literacy.

Consider the following tips for advocating for yourself at the doctor's office:



Practice what you want to say.

You may have better results with your doctor if you practice what you want to say ahead of time. Think about your primary concerns and how you want to express them to your doctor.



Ask questions.

It's crucial that you understand your care. You may find it helpful to write down your questions ahead of time, as many people forget them when they're speaking to their doctor.



Bring a friend.

Having an extra person at your appointments can provide comfort and support if you feel frustrated or overwhelmed. They also offer a second set of ears and can take notes for you.



Prioritize a follow-up plan.

Ensure there's a plan for further care. If you have new medication, make sure you understand how to take it and for how long. Additionally, you can ask if there are any symptoms that mean you should contact your doctor sooner than planned.



Consider a second opinion.

Remember that you have the right to a second opinion. If speaking to your doctor has left you unsure or uncomfortable, consult other physicians to learn about alternative ideas or approaches.