

CONNECTCARE3

Your Personal Healthcare Advocate

Effective Communication with Your Healthcare Provider

Health literacy is defined as the degree to which one has the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health choices. Research shows that 40% of adults lack the level of health literacy necessary to manage their own healthcare (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).



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Effective communication with your healthcare provider is paramount to getting healthy and staying healthy. In addition to the positive benefits to overall health, finding a provider you can communicate with aids in improving the quality of your healthcare decisions by enabling you to make the most informed decisions necessary for proper treatment. Communication also promotes cost effectiveness and reduces healthcare spending by avoiding duplication of unnecessary tests and procedures. Open communication between patients and healthcare providers makes patient follow-through on treatments more likely and ensures a better overall understanding of their diagnosis and treatment options. Better understanding, in addition to leading to improved survival and overall health and wellness, provides more positive health outcomes, enables patient self-management, and improved care coordination among the patient and other members of the healthcare team.

Tips for Communicating with your Healthcare Provider

- ◆ Write down questions and points you want to convey before the appointment
- ◆ Be clear and concise
- ◆ If you have lots of concerns to discuss, make this known at the time of scheduling so extra time can be scheduled
- ◆ Educate yourself about your condition by using reputable sources
- ◆ Learn the routine of your provider's office and use it to your advantage
- ◆ Recognize that not all questions have answers
- ◆ Use "I" statements
- ◆ Share facts; don't make assumptions
- ◆ Listen actively
- ◆ Ask for clarification when necessary

The importance of communicating effectively with your healthcare provider is vital when it comes to preserving, maintaining, or regaining optimal health. For more communication tips on getting the most out of your medical appointments, please read the article on page 2 of this month's newsletter.

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Getting the Most from Your Medical Appointment

The average length of an appointment with your healthcare provider is approximately 15 minutes. Given the short amount of time you have face-to-face with your provider, it is important to prepare for the appointment to efficiently use the time you will have to discuss your concerns and become informed about your plan of care. The tips outlined below are designed to provide you with detailed action steps you can take before, during, and after an appointment to ensure you are receiving the health care you deserve.

Before the Appointment

- Make a list of questions
- List your symptoms, including date of onset, duration, and severity
- Create a timeline of the problem. If you have consulted other physicians about this problem, keep track of previous test results, outcomes, and treatment recommendations
- Make a list of all current medications and supplements
- Bring all necessary records and insurance information
- Arrive early, if requested, to complete paperwork

During the Appointment

- Take notes or consider bringing someone along to take notes
- Ask questions from your prepared list of questions
- If you don't understand something, ask for clarification
- At the end of the appointment, summarize what the doctor has recommended
- Ask about next steps, follow-up appointments, referral to a specialist, treatment or testing recommendations, and the timeline for completing
- Find out who to contact if you have questions and the best way to contact them

After the Appointment

- Follow treatment recommendations or seek a second opinion
- Make any necessary follow-up appointments
- Don't hesitate to call with questions

Some Facts to Consider

Expert physicians have found:*

1 in 5 patients may be misdiagnosed
 60% of patients may be getting the wrong treatment
 30¢ of every dollar spent on healthcare is being wasted on misdiagnosis and misguided care

When patients make decisions for a procedure, physician, hospital, or treatment plan:**

67% do not understand their diagnosis and treatment plan
 50% can answer only basic questions about their diagnosis
 46% make sub-optimal care decisions

*WebMD Website

**AHRQ; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

*Do you have a
 medical or social
 services concern?*

Please call:

877.223.2350 or

visit our website at-

www.ConnectCare3.com

A Patient Testimonial...

“Going through a medical problem can be lonely and confusing. Often professionals in the medical field speak a “language” that is not familiar to the common patient like myself. Having someone to talk to before and after each doctor visit made the appointments with physicians so much more understandable and profitable in helping me to make the best medical decisions possible.”

—Frank Dumbleton
Breinigsville, PA

In July of 2011 I noticed that I could not hear out of my left ear. Because my grandfather had a hearing aid, I thought that I was going to need one. At my first visit, my ear doctor prescribed an MRI which I thought was pretty unusual for a hearing problem. The MRI showed I had an acoustic neuroma, a slow-growing and non-cancerous tumor of the nerve that connects the ear to the brain. I went home and started searching the internet. I was referred to a specialist to help decide which of my three options I wanted to do – surgery, radiation therapy, or watch and wait. The specialist recommended an operation. I was not comfortable and not sure how to make a decision about treatment.

At that time our office contracted with ConnectCare3. My initial discussions with the Nurse Navigator focused on hospitals with recognized excellence and expert physicians. She also provided tremendous resources for gathering information on my medical condition. The research was extensive and in-depth and allowed me to gain confidence in my decision. She provided the contact information for the Association for Acoustic Neuroma; this gave me direct contact with many individuals with my same condition. After reviewing the research and many discussions with my Nurse Navigator, I decided my course of treatment. I felt very comfortable with my treatment choice. I would have never had that confidence without the help of ConnectCare3. The Nurse Navigator was knowledgeable and compassionate.

Going through a medical problem can be lonely and confusing. Often professionals in the medical field speak a “language” that is not familiar to the common patient like myself. Having someone to talk to before and after each doctor visit made the appointments with physicians so much more understandable and profitable in helping me to make the best medical decisions possible.

If I have to deal with another medical condition in the future, I will not hesitate to consult with CC3.



The ConnectCare3 Team

LaRue McManus, R.N., Nurse Navigator
Jannifer Cayless, R.N., Nurse Navigator
Karen Osborne, R.N., M.S.N., Nurse Navigator
Stephanie Mesaric, R.N., M.S., Nurse Navigator
Elizabeth McKay, R.N., Nurse Navigator
Jean Good, R.N., Nurse Navigator
Michelle Gilmore, Patient Advocate
Ann Linkey, Patient Advocate
Beverly James, Education Coordinator

lmcmamus@connectcare3.com
jcayless@connectcare3.com
kosborne@connectcare3.com
smesaric@connectcare3.com
emckay@connectcare3.com
jgood@connectcare3.com
mgilmore@connectcare3.com
alinkey@connectcare3.com
bjames@connectcare3.com

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