

HOW TO BECOME A WORLD-CLASS PATIENT ADVOCATE!

Preparing for Healthier Healthcare for Your Loved One!

A recent study conducted by Dr. Roy Kessels, in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, shows patients forget 80% of what a doctor tells them after they leave the clinic. The 20% patients think they remember – half of that they remember wrong!¹ It is **CRITICAL** that family caregivers go to the doctor visits so that this terrible problem can be overcome. So, the important question is how can we, as family caregivers, do a better job listening & understanding our loved ones treatment plans? How can we become world-class patient advocates?

Communication between healthcare professionals and the general public is difficult – we speak 2 different languages. During most visits the doctor asks a lot of questions and then verbalizes the treatment plan. The problem is only about 5% of the population learn by listening (i.e. auditory learners). Most of us learn visually.

If you are going to the doctor's office soon with a family member you are caring for - you can make the most of your visit by doing three things: prepare to allow the doctor to move through his or her typical process, take notes and ask all the questions you need to.

Here is what to be prepared for and what you can do to –
**TAKE THIS CHECKLIST WITH YOU AND
BE A WORLD CLASS PATIENT ADVOCATE!**

¹ Kessels, Dr. Roy, "Patient's Memory for Medical Information", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, April 2003

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- STEP I: The Doctor's or Nurse's In-Take Process.** Prepare to briefly discuss:
 - 1. **Chief Complaint (CC)** – specifically describe in a few sentences your symptoms
 - 2. **History of Present Illness (HPI)** – briefly describe how or when it happened
 - 3. **Past Medical History (PMH)** – summarize
 - 4. **Family History (FH)** – anyone else in family have this problem?
 - 5. **Other Histories (OH)**– other relevant info about related to your health?
 - 6. **Alcohol/Tobacco Use** – how much and how often?
 - 7. **Drug Allergies** – be sure to state them clearly to avoid bad reactions

- STEP II: Your Task - Bring Your Loved Ones Medicine Management System with you** – whether it is a list or medical form - **show** it to the doctor & be sure that it reflects ALL meds your family member is currently taking.
 - 1. **Over the Counter (OTC)** – like aspirin, cold tablets, supplements, naturopathic etc.
 - 2. **Prescribed medicines** – what are you currently taking and the name of the doctor that prescribe it and what it is for.

- STEP III: Doctor Reviews Patient's Vital Signs** - Questions the doctor/nurse ask that are designed to discover any problems you forgot to mention or didn't think about.

- STEP IV: Advocate** – as soon as the clinic visit is complete get the following information:
 - 1. Treatment Plan – in writing or printed out for you.
 - 2. Visual aids that will help you understand your condition and med regimen if it is new or changes.
 - 3. Find out how to get your questions answered that come up after you leave.
 - 4. Summarize by paraphrasing everything the doctor said to ensure you understood.
 - 5. Ask where you can go to learn more about your family member's condition (where to get good information your doctor trusts - what Internet sites & what hospital/clinic resources there are).

Take this checklist along to ensure you haven't forgotten anything! With this in hand, you will be a **WORLD CLASS PATIENT ADVOCATE!**