

9 STEPS TO

SPEAK UP FOR YOURSELF DURING MEDICAL ENCOUNTERS

Speaking up for yourself at your medical appointments can help you get the most out of your time. Advocating for yourself makes it easier for your provider to understand exactly what you are experiencing and give you the care you need. Developing skills isn't easy, but with some practice, you can effectively communicate with any medical professional.



1



WRITE IT DOWN

Keep a journal. Write down questions you have as you go so you don't forget anything.

2



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Pay close attention to your body, your baby, and how you feel-while you are pregnant and after your baby is born.

MAKE YOUR CONCERNS UNDERSTOOD

Have some questions and different ways to explain your concerns ready. Using some of these phrases may help you if you feel unheard.

5



3



PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Learn how to access your medical records, so you can keep track of test results,

4



BRING YOUR OWN SUPPORT

Friends, family, a doula, or a partner can support you when you visit your doctor. Bring someone with you.

6



PRIORITIZE

Ask your questions in order of importance. If your time does get cut short, your most pressing concerns can be addressed.

7



TAKE NOTES

Bring a pen and notepad or use a smartphone. Write down any new medications, lifestyle and dietary recommendations, and next steps.

8



ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Make a list of at least three questions to ask.

9



CONSIDER A SECOND OPINION

A second opinion is not negative. Many physicians will help their patients find another physician for a second opinion because this is a part of medical ethical code.

Could I try explaining that again?

No. That's not quite right. It's more like this...

I know my body, and this does not feel right.



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