



## Three reasons to take a notepad to your next doctor visit

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For many people, going to the doctor is a mildly stressful experience at best. You may feel ill and have little energy to talk about what you need. Or maybe you're anticipating being rushed through an appointment, which puts you on edge.

Maybe simply stepping into the office induces an inexplicable fear.

Believe it or not, there are some simple things you can do to make your visit less stressful and more productive. Here are three reasons why you should take a notepad to your next office visit.

### Your visit will be short

Sometimes you feel like your time with the doctor just isn't long enough.

That means you've got to be prepared for your appointment just as you would for a business meeting. It sounds simple and it is, but preparation is a powerful way to reduce anxiety and a great way to make the most of your appointment. So get your notepad, make a list of your concerns and think about how you want to talk to your doctor about them.

### Notes are more reliable than your memory

Jot down notes so that you won't have to remember everything your doctor said. Write down the name of any new diagnosis, treatment option or medication, and check with your doctor to make sure you spelled it correctly. You should also record any tips given and read them aloud to your doctor for confirmation. And remember to ask your doctor to explain anything you don't understand.

### You'll need to follow your treatment plan

The top complaint doctors have about their patients is that they aren't following advice or treatment recommendations. But compliance these days can be a lot more complicated than just remembering to take a pill. Notes from your doctor's visit can help you stay organized and allow you to do your best to follow your doctor's treatment plan.

Review the information you noted during your office visit, and if you can't remember or don't understand something, call the office to get the information you need.

Using something as simple as a notepad can change the relationship you have with your doctor and lead to better health results. The following resources provide additional tips and advice you can use to strengthen the relationship between you and your doctor:

- [What you need to know about doctor-patient relationships](#)
- [Tips on communicating with your doctor](#)

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*This article is part of a toolkit that supports the Choosing Wisely® campaign, an initiative of the ABIM Foundation in partnership with Consumer Reports to help patients and physicians have conversations about health. The articles, tip sheets and links in the series will provide helpful information on everything from coping with serious illness, to preventive care, to the do's and don'ts of common tests. For more information, see [the rest of the series](#) and all the [Choosing Wisely resources from Consumer Reports](#).*