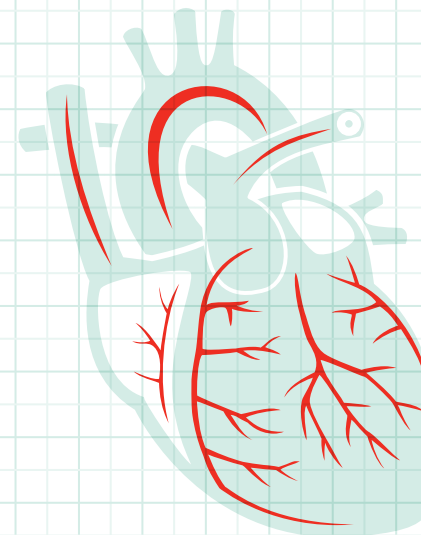


PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

In preparing for your appointment, the following are some examples of things you should do:

- ♥ Be aware of any pre-appointment restrictions, such as fasting.
- ♥ Ask questions. Prepare in advance for your office visit by making a list of questions or concerns you may wish to discuss. If you don't understand the information or instructions your healthcare professional has given you, ask for clarification.
- ♥ Write down any symptoms you are experiencing including any that may seem unrelated to heart disease.
- ♥ Be truthful about your symptoms and behavior. You cannot expect your healthcare professional to diagnose you properly or prescribe the right treatment unless you disclose your current symptoms and any harmful behaviors you are engaging in, such as smoking or eating fatty foods.
- ♥ Bring a list of your current medications and dosage (prescriptions and over-the-counter.) Mention any allergies.
- ♥ List your past health history including any surgical procedures and major tests, especially if performed within the past two years.
- ♥ Bring copies of recent lab results, scans or other tests that were taken during the past year.
- ♥ Prepare a list of other healthcare providers that you are currently seeing and the condition being followed. Also, include their phone numbers and addresses.
- ♥ Compile a family health history of close blood relatives.
- ♥ Ask your spouse, significant other, a member of your family or close friend to accompany you to your appointment.
- ♥ If you go alone, bring a tape recorder and inform your healthcare professional that you want to record any information and instructions they are giving you. Often, we are nervous and don't hear what is being said. By having a recording, you can review it later and share it with your family.
- ♥ Let your healthcare professional know that you want to create your own personal "heart profile." You want to keep your heart healthy and would like their help in achieving that goal.

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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

Your healthcare professional can be an important partner in helping you set and reach goals for heart health. But don't wait for him/her to mention heart disease or its risk factors. Many healthcare professionals don't routinely bring up the topic, especially with their female patients. New research shows that women are less likely than men to receive heart healthy recommendations from their healthcare professionals.

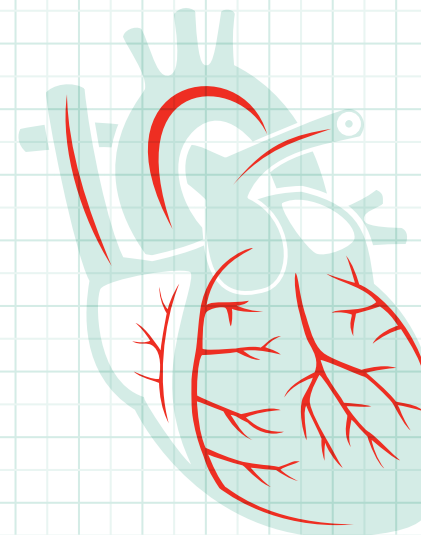
Here is how to speak up and establish good, clear communication between you and your healthcare professional:

ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED ♥ BE OPEN ♥ KEEP IT SIMPLE

Getting answers to these questions will give you important information about your heart health and what you can do to improve it. Bring this list with you to your next visit with your healthcare professional.

1. What is heart disease? What is my risk for heart disease?
Is heart disease hereditary?
2. What is my blood pressure? What does it mean, and what do I need to do about it?
3. What are my cholesterol numbers? (These include total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) "lousy" cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) "healthy" cholesterol, and triglycerides.)
What do they mean for me and what do I need to do about them?
4. What are my body mass index (BMI) and waist measurement?
Do they indicate that I need to lose weight for my health?
5. What is my blood sugar level? Does it mean I am at risk for diabetes? (pre-diabetes)
6. Insist on knowing the nature of your heart disease and the steps in diagnosis and treatment
7. What other screening tests for heart disease do I need?
How often should I return for checkups for my heart health?
8. For smokers: What can you do to help me quit smoking?
9. How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?
What kinds of activities are helpful?
10. What is a heart healthy eating plan for me? Should I see a registered dietitian or qualified nutritionist to learn more about healthy eating?
11. How can I tell if I am having a heart attack? What should I do?
12. Make sure you understand your doctor's instructions and follow them. If you are still uncertain about what to do when you get home, call for further clarification.

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Follow Up

1. If you were given a prescription, don't forget to have it filled and take them as prescribed.
2. If the physician changes your medications, don't forget to discard the ones in your medicine cabinet.
3. Don't hesitate to obtain a second opinion from another healthcare professional affiliated with another hospital.
4. Educate yourself! Read articles about women and heart health to keep abreast of new research findings and treatments. You can share this information with your healthcare professionals. Learn what you can do to take better care of yourself: eat healthy foods and get more exercise.
5. Speak up if something is bothering you about your medical care. To do nothing means you may eventually avoid your doctor visits or fail to follow your treatment plan.
6. Maintain boundaries. Treat your healthcare professionals with respect and expect to be treated with the same respect. Do not burden them with unnecessary phone calls or repeated visits. Also respect the time constraints healthcare professionals now face. Use your time together as efficiently as possible.

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