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The ABC's of becoming your own patient advocate.

A. Ask questions...

B. Be prepared...

C. Communicate...

- Without doubt, *communication* is crucial to good health care. When people take an active role in their care, research shows they fare better in satisfaction and in how well their appointments go and how their treatments work.
- Build the *ideal relationship* between you and your physician.
- Write down your questions before attending appointments. This way your mind is clear to better understand new thoughts from your physician and that you are guaranteed that your questions are answered.
- Make sure you keep an *updated medication list* with you at all times.
- Have all of your *previous medical information* available.
- *Example: Previous physician appointment notes and recommendations, changes in your medication and any recent imagery. (It's always a good idea to keep these items*

organized in a folder especially if you have a caregiver assisting you.)

- Always keep a *calendar and a pencil* with you in order to keep appointments organized.
- Ask the office manager, schedulers or nurses for *educational pieces* on the problem being addressed during your appointment. This is another way of walking away from your appointment well informed.
- *Talk to someone...* It's always a great idea to bring a friend, caregiver, significant other or family member to your appointments to help you review your office visit.
- *Take notes...* The most important thing you can do for yourself is to take notes during your appointments alone or accompanied by another individual. This helps with best understanding your appointment and gives you and outline in case you may want to ask a question later and may have forgotten during your appointment.
- *The end result of advocacy is empowerment. Advocacy makes you more than just a number or statistic. And there is great comfort in being organized. Remember, your best advocate is you!*