

TALKING WITH MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

com • mu • ni • ca • tion (ke-myoo'ni-ka'shen), *n.*

1. *The act of communicating; transmission.*
2.
 - a. *The exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, writing, or behavior.*
 - b. *Interpersonal rapport.*

(American Heritage Dictionary)

- ❖ Your health care is a partnership between two experts – the medical expert and, you, the "owner" expert.
- ❖ Be your own best advocate.
- ❖ Be Brave.
Don't be afraid to ask questions.
Don't be afraid to tell them you don't understand.
- ❖ Realize that sometimes your questions may not have answers.
- ❖ Be a good patient:
Be prepared for your appointments with a clear list of symptoms, you don't have to know the jargon, but try to be descriptive and concise about what you are experiencing. Your doctor isn't a mind reader. You have to tell them what is ailing you;
Research your condition if possible;
Have a list of questions ready to ask, write them down if you need to in order to remember them; Keep in mind the time allotted for the appointment and use the time wisely
Carry a list of all your medications, including why you are taking them, when you started them and any recently discontinued medications;
Wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace;
If one therapy isn't working, be willing to try something else.
- ❖ Have someone go with you to appointments, and to be your advocate and watch over you if you are unconscious or unable to speak.
- ❖ Be proactive with first responders and Emergency Room personnel;
Visit your first responders and emergency room(s) to tell the people about yourself and your illness;
- ❖ Be informed.
Attend PH support groups (if you like to engage with others) for companionship and to become better informed;
Search the internet – with a grain of salt;
- ❖ Take advantage of "patient advocates" either with the pharmaceutical companies or your health insurance.
- ❖ Remember that medical professionals are people, too, and they make mistakes like everybody else.
- ❖ Build a rapport with your doctor or nurse.
- ❖ Find out who you should contact with questions that come up later. Find out the best way to contact them – phone, e-mail, etc.
- ❖ Let your doctor or nurse know you will do what they recommend.
- ❖ Let your doctor or nurse know you appreciate what they do for you.

Other Sources:

"Making the Most of Doctor Appointments," www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=342

"Information on Getting the Most from Your Doctors Appointment,"
www.webmd.com/osteoarthritis/guide/osteoarthritis-doctors-appt

"Getting the Most from Your Doctor's Appointment – NotJustSkin.org,"
www.notjustskin.org/en/drappt.html