



Making the Most of Healthcare Visits

Successful visits with the health care team don't just happen; they require planning.

Before the Visit

It is important to bring a list of questions, pen and paper, or electronic device for taking notes when you meet with the health care team. It's easy to forget both what you and the Veteran wanted to discuss during the appointment and also what the provider has told you.

1. Talk with the Veteran (when possible) and write down the questions you both have for the health care team.
2. Make a list of symptoms and changes since the Veteran's last visit.
3. Put together a current list of all medications.
4. Confirm the appointment.

Providing a current medication list may help prevent drug interactions or other problems with medication from arising.

During the Visit

The provider may be directing their questions and conversation to the Veteran. This is their legal responsibility. Don't take over this relationship, but do correct misstatements and add omitted information. At the end of the visit, summarize the next steps to make sure everyone is in agreement about what is to be done and by whom.

- Describe symptoms and changes.
- Ask questions, especially related to medications.
- Record provider/nurse's instructions.
- Discuss recommendations.
- Verify follow-up.

After the Visit

It is important that you review the appointment with the Veteran, including how you both thought it went and the follow-up that was recommended. If medication was prescribed, it is critical that it be filled.

- Review notes with the Veteran (whenever possible).
- Discuss the visit.
- Fill prescriptions.
- Update the Veteran's patient file.
- Call for test results.
- Make follow-up or referral appointments.

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