

**DOCTOR APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST**

**BEFORE THE DOCTOR APPOINTMENT**

**Confirm:**

* The appointment day and time (add to elder’s and your own calendar)
* The purpose of the appointment
* Lab results have been received and reviewed by the doctor’s office

**Gather the following:**

* Proof of health insurance
* Driver’s license or state ID
* Medical history, surgeries, and current list of medications (see pages 000–000)
* Past test results and X-rays (mammograms, colonoscopies, blood tests, etc.)
* Proof of vaccinations and boosters
* List of allergies
* List of past and current health-care providers
* Health or fitness tracker documentation of daily habits
* Emergency contact information
* Note-taking devices (use a note-taking app on a smartphone or paper and pen, or ask per­mission to record the session)

**Prepare to discuss:**

* Current medical conditions
* New symptoms
* Pain location, history, and level (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most intense)
* What the pain feels like (piercing, aching, burning, throbbing?)
* Changed symptoms since the last appointment
* Questions to ask the doctor
* Recent hospitalizations
* Major life stressors (such as worries about money or recent deaths of loved ones)
* Family medical history

**Inform the doctor’s office of any needed accommodations:**

* Accessible parking
* Wheelchair assistance
* Help of an interpreter or translator

**Prepare for telemedicine appointments:**

* Use the best camera you can find. This may be attached to your phone, laptop, tablet, or desktop computer. Test the camera in advance.
* Test the sound and video on the device.
* Test the internet connection.
* Make sure the device is charged.
* Find a quiet space and adjust lighting. Limit distractions.

**DURING THE DOCTOR APPOINTMENT**

**Be prepared to ask questions and take notes on the following:**

* Ask for the definition of unfamiliar medical terms.
* Repeat what is being said in your own words to avoid misunderstandings.
* Ask about the cause of the illness.
* Ask about the doctor’s experience in treating the illness.
* Ask for copies of medical records, charts, and test results.
* Ask if there is a choice in hospitals if surgery is recommended.
* Ask about potential short-term and long-term lifestyle modifications.
* Ask about related costs.

**Ask these questions if tests are recommended:**

* What specifically do you hope to accomplish with this test?
* What are the risks involved with taking this test?
* Can you describe the actual procedure?
* What is the likelihood of inaccurate test results or false positives?
* What pretest preparations are necessary?
* When and how will the test results be communicated?

**Look for clues that older patients are in good hands:**

* Is the elder acknowledged respectfully and attended to?
* Are they allowed enough time for explanations and questions?
* Are they listened to no matter how busy the staff is?
* Is the elder offered an individualized plan of care?
* Does the elder feel empowered to make choices and decisions?