



Make the Most of your **Doctor Visits**



As a patient, there are several things you can do before, during, and after your doctor visit that will help ensure you receive the best possible care. By taking a little time to plan ahead, you're more likely to get your questions answered, understand your treatment options, and remember what you need to do next.

Getting Ready for Your Appointment

Make a list to take along

You'll find a convenient worksheet on the back of this guide. If you prefer to make your own list, here are some things to include:

- **The questions you want to ask.** Examples: Why am I feeling this way, how am I doing, or what else can I be doing to feel better?
- **What you need to tell or show your doctor.** This could include symptoms, family history, or exposure to other people who've been ill.
- **All medications and supplements you currently take.** That includes over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal remedies. Better yet, bring all these items with you so your doctor can see the labels.
- **Any allergies you have,** including bad reactions you've had to medications.

Think about asking someone to go with you

Consider taking a trusted friend or family member with you, especially if you feel ill or have serious health problems. This person can help listen, take notes, and help you remember what was said.

Check your insurance benefits

Understanding your benefits before a visit will help make sure your bill is not a surprise. You can check your benefits by looking at your benefit summary or member handbook, both available online through InTouch for Members at PacificSource.com, or you can call our Customer Service team at (888) 977-8299 or email us at cs@pacificsource.com.

During Your Appointment

- **Explain why you're there.**
- **Answer the doctor's questions.** Your clear and complete answers help the doctor figure out what might be going on.
- **Listen to your doctor's diagnosis.** Do you understand what your provider is telling you? If questions come up, ask them.
- **Ask questions about any medications, tests, or procedures your doctor recommends.** Remember, more treatment doesn't always mean better care. It's smart to ask about costs, risks, side effects, alternative treatment options, and what the doctor expects to learn from the procedure. For prescription drugs, you'll save money if you ask your doctor to prescribe generics whenever possible.
- **Ask any remaining questions from your list.** Ask anything your doctor hasn't already answered, and take notes.
- **Know what happens next.** Before you leave, make sure you're clear about the next steps and when they need to happen.

Follow Through

- **Do your part.** Most likely, you agreed to do something: come in for a test, schedule a follow-up appointment, try a new medication. Be sure to follow through.
- **Watch for possible problems.** For your safety, be alert in the hours and days after you start a new medication or treatment. If you notice any new symptoms or problems, let your doctor know right away.
- **Call back if you need to.** If you have new questions or concerns, call your doctor's office. If you were expecting to get test results or schedule tests and haven't heard from anyone, call the doctor's office.

Use PacificSource as a Resource

Contact us with questions about your benefits, doctors, or claims. Our Customer Service team can:

- Tell you if a service is covered and what your share of the cost will be.
- Let you know whether a surgery, procedure, or medication requires preauthorization, and whether that has been completed.
- Help you find a doctor or other provider in your plan's network.
- Answer your questions about a claim or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement.

How to Ask Questions

Many people hold back on asking questions during their medical appointments. Some are embarrassed, think it will take too much time, or they're not sure what to say.

Asking questions can be hard. But remember, it's your body. You need—and deserve—to understand what your doctor or other health professional is telling you.

- Take your time and think about what the doctor has said.
- Ask questions that will help you clearly understand the diagnosis.
- Refer to your list of questions, or use the worksheet on the back of this brochure to guide you.
- Ask your doctor if working with a Nurse Case Manager or enrolling in a condition support program would help with ongoing medical needs.



More Ways to Ask for Information

If you don't understand the answers to your initial questions, here are some ways to ask again:

I'm sorry, but I still don't really get that. Could you explain it in a different way?

I'm not sure I understand the reason for that test. What will we learn from doing it?

I'm still not clear on my treatment options. Could you write them down for me?

See last page for our doctor visit worksheet.

Prepare for your Doctor Office Visit

Use this form as a guide, so you won't forget important information you want to discuss with your doctor.

Doctor's name:

Date of office visit:

Complete this section **before** your appointment.

Questions or concerns you want to discuss (symptoms, when you first noticed them, relevant family history, etc.):

Any prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, or supplements you are currently taking, plus any allergies:

Complete the following sections **during** your appointment.

If your doctor recommends medication, tests, screenings, or procedures:

Diagnosis or condition being treated?

Name of the test or procedure?

What are the risks?

Are these tests routine or diagnostic?

Are there alternatives?

How do I prepare?

If your doctor writes a prescription:

What is the name of the medication?

Are there any side-effects?

At the end of the visit, ask:

Do I need to return for another visit?

Can I call for test results?

When do I need to report back about my condition?

What danger signs should I look for?

What else do I need to know?