Getting the Most from Your Doctor's Visit

(Visit Parish Health Ministry section of CSUMC website for full-length version with more details!)

We all know the first visit of the year to each doctor, or a new doctor visit, begins with providing your health information so **be prepared to present**:

- Insurance cards and picture ID
- Medication list
- Pharmacy name, location, contact info
- Allergy list (include nature of reaction)
- List of medical conditions and surgeries
- Family medical history
- Other doctors (location, contact info)
- Review of symptoms/conditions

Your **medication list should include ALL products you are taking**: prescription, over the counter, vitamins, supplements, and herbals. Also document what it is for (since products may be used for multiple conditions), dosage and instructions, when it was started, and who prescribed it. Try grouping them together based on what you are taking them for, such as: heart, lungs, GI, etc.

Before going

- **Prioritize your list** of concerns and questions in case time does not allow for all of them.
- **Be specific** when listing symptoms including frequency, triggers, progression of the problem, what you think the cause may be and why.
- **Consider asking someone to go with you** and discuss their role beforehand to ensure they don't control the visit.

During the visit

- **Be honest**! If you are not, inappropriate changes could occur or problems could go unaddressed and get worse.
- **Keep an open mind**; don't have preconceived ideas of what tests or treatments should be ordered.
- **Take notes**, repeat back, or ask if you can record instructions with your phone.
- **Share concerns about the visit** if you feel rushed, worried, or uncomfortable. You might even offer to schedule a second visit to get all of your questions and concerns addressed.

Doing your part to be prepared can make a significant difference. I have personally seen it within my own family!

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