

# WHAT TO TELL YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

For the best diagnosis and care of any medical condition, it is important to communicate with your doctor. Tell your healthcare team personal information — even if it makes you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable.



## HERE'S WHAT TO TELL

Prior to your appointment, write down the answers to the following questions. You might want to ask a close friend or loved one what they've observed, and maybe even take someone with you to your appointment. *Your answers to these questions are what you tell your healthcare provider.*

QUESTION (Ask yourself.)	YOUR ANSWER (This is what to tell your doctor.)	YOUR DOCTOR'S RESPONSE (If you don't understand, say so.)
<p><b>What is the problem?</b> <i>I feel a dull pain that starts at the base of my skull and radiates into both my eyes.</i></p>		
<p><b>What happens specifically?</b> <i>I awaken around 2 a.m. with an urgent need to urinate, then when I get to the toilet only a few drops come out.</i></p>		
<p><b>When did you notice the problem?</b> <i>This problem has been happening for about 2 months.</i></p>		
<p><b>Is the problem constant, or does it come and go?</b> <i>It happens every 3 days and lasts about 20 minutes.</i></p>		
<p><b>Does anything make the problem worse or better?</b> <i>I seem to have more intestinal cramping when I eat pizza. I feel better when I eat a good breakfast.</i></p>		
<p><b>How bothersome is the problem?</b> (on a scale of 1 to 10; 10 being worst) <i>I am bothered about a "4" because I can still function using over-the-counter pain medication.</i></p>	<p><b>Physically</b> (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p><b>Emotionally</b> (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	

More questions -->

QUESTION (Ask yourself.)	YOUR ANSWER (This is what to tell your doctor.)	YOUR DOCTOR'S RESPONSE (If you don't understand, say so.)
<p><b>What are your current lifestyle practices?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Smoking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not exercising regularly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eating poorly or skipping meals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling stressed, depressed, or unhappy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p><b>What medications are you taking?</b> (include name, strength, frequency) <i>I currently take a 500 mg vitamin C pill every morning.</i></p>		
<p><b>Have you had any reactions to medicines, or are you allergic to anything?</b> <i>Codeine makes me throw up.</i></p>		
<p><b>Have you had any recent illnesses</b> (even colds), <b>accidents</b> (including tripping and falling), <b>or changes in your home, work, or lifestyle?</b> <i><u>Illnesses:</u> Last October, I had a cold with 101 degree fever that lasted a week.</i> <i><u>Accidents:</u> None.</i> <i><u>Changes:</u> I lost my job last month.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Illnesses: _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accidents: _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Changes: _____ _____</p>	
<p><b>Have you tried alternative treatments?</b> <i>I got a massage once a week for the past three months.</i></p>		

If you have more than one concern, fill out a sheet for each issue. Then prioritize, your concerns. That way, you'll have your most pressing issue taken care of if you or the doctor runs short on time.

Source: *Quick tips – When talking with your doctor.* Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 2009.

