



Tips for Talking to Your Eye Care Professional

Today, patients take an active role in their health care. You and your doctor will work in partnership to achieve your best possible level of health. An important part of this relationship is good communication. Here are some questions you can ask your doctor to get your discussion started:

About my disease or disorder...

- What is my diagnosis?
- What caused my condition?
- Can my condition be treated?
- How will this condition affect my vision now and in the future?
- Should I watch for any particular symptoms and notify you if they occur?
- Should I make any lifestyle changes?

About my tests...

- What kinds of tests will I have?
- What do you expect to find out from these tests?
- When will I know the results?
- Do I have to do anything special to prepare for any of the tests?
- Do these tests have any side effects or risks?
- Will I need more tests later?

About my treatment...

- What is the treatment for my condition?
- When will the treatment start, and how long will it last?
- What are the benefits of this treatment, and how successful is it?
- What are the risks and side effects associated with this treatment?
- Are there foods, drugs, or activities I should avoid while I'm on this treatment?
- If my treatment includes taking a medication, what should I do if I miss a dose?
- Are other treatments available?

Here are a few more tips:

- If you don't understand your doctor's responses, ask questions until you do understand.

- Take notes, or get a friend or family member to take notes for you. Or, bring a tape recorder to assist in your recollection of the discussion.
- Ask your doctor to write down his or her instructions to you.
- Ask your doctor for printed material about your condition.
- If you still have trouble understanding your doctor's answers, ask where you can go for more information.
- Other members of your healthcare team, such as nurses and pharmacists, can be good sources of information. Talk to them, too.



Ask Questions.

Understanding your doctor's responses is essential to good communication.

Information and Resources

The National Eye Institute (NEI) is part of the National Institutes of Health and the federal government's lead agency for vision research that leads to sight-saving treatments, and it plays a key role in reducing visual impairment and blindness. For more information, visit the NEI Website at www.nei.nih.gov

Everyone over age 50 should have a comprehensive dilated eye examination. It is one of the best things you can do to protect your sight.

