

1 You have a story to tell.

Don't be afraid to tell it.

No one knows **YOU** better than **YOU**. Although your care team has a tremendous amount of medical expertise, you have life expertise and your day-to-day experiences are just as important. Your knowledge is an important ingredient towards wellness. Set an agenda with concrete goals for each visit and include all the pertinent details.

2

Make sure to write down and ask questions.

Your health depends on open communication. Asking questions is the best way to gain a deeper understanding, and is the simplest and most effective way of learning about your condition and how to best manage it.

3

Know your options so you can make informed decisions.

It's important you understand all of your options, as well as the risks and benefits of each option, including cost, before you determine the best pathway for **YOU**. You want your care to fit your goals, your personal preferences, and your limitations so that you can develop a goal-oriented action plan in collaboration with your care team.

4

Reconcile medications at every visit.

To ensure your care team provides you with the best care possible and to prevent any drug interactions, keep an up to date list of your medications and home remedies, including vitamins. Share this list and any updates with each of your doctors since they don't always coordinate with one another. You can also bring your medications in to the visit, if this is easier.

5

Get a second opinion.

Navigating options can be complex and you may want to get the advice of another doctor before proceeding with treatment. Make sure all your tests and records are shared with the new doctor so you don't have to repeat them.

6

Designate an advocate.

Navigating the complexity of the healthcare system can be difficult. It can be hard to recall important information, make decisions when emotions get in the way, or coordinate between different doctors. It helps to have someone by your side along the journey so you can focus your energy on getting well. This can either be a family member a friend, or even a professional navigator.

7

Stay organized.

You will be seeing doctors, getting many tests, and swamped with medical information and bills that may feel overwhelming. Keep all of your information in one place so you can better manage appointments, treatments, and bills and refer back to it when you need it.

8

Take charge of your care and maintain access to your records.

Access to your tests and medical information is important in empowering you to manage your care. It can help you better coordinate your care between different doctors, but also ensures you understand your diagnosis and results, allowing you to seek clarification and correct mistakes, if needed.

9

Stay connected.

Connecting with others can support you through the journey and improve your quality of life, whether it's informal support from family and friends, formal support from group or individual therapy or peer-to-peer networking through on-line communities.

10

Partner with your care team and share what you learn online.

We all rely on “Dr. Google” for information but it’s sometimes difficult to determine whether information you find is reliable. Content you find on the Internet is not regulated; therefore, you must use good judgment when searching. Your care team can also be a good source of sites to visit online.