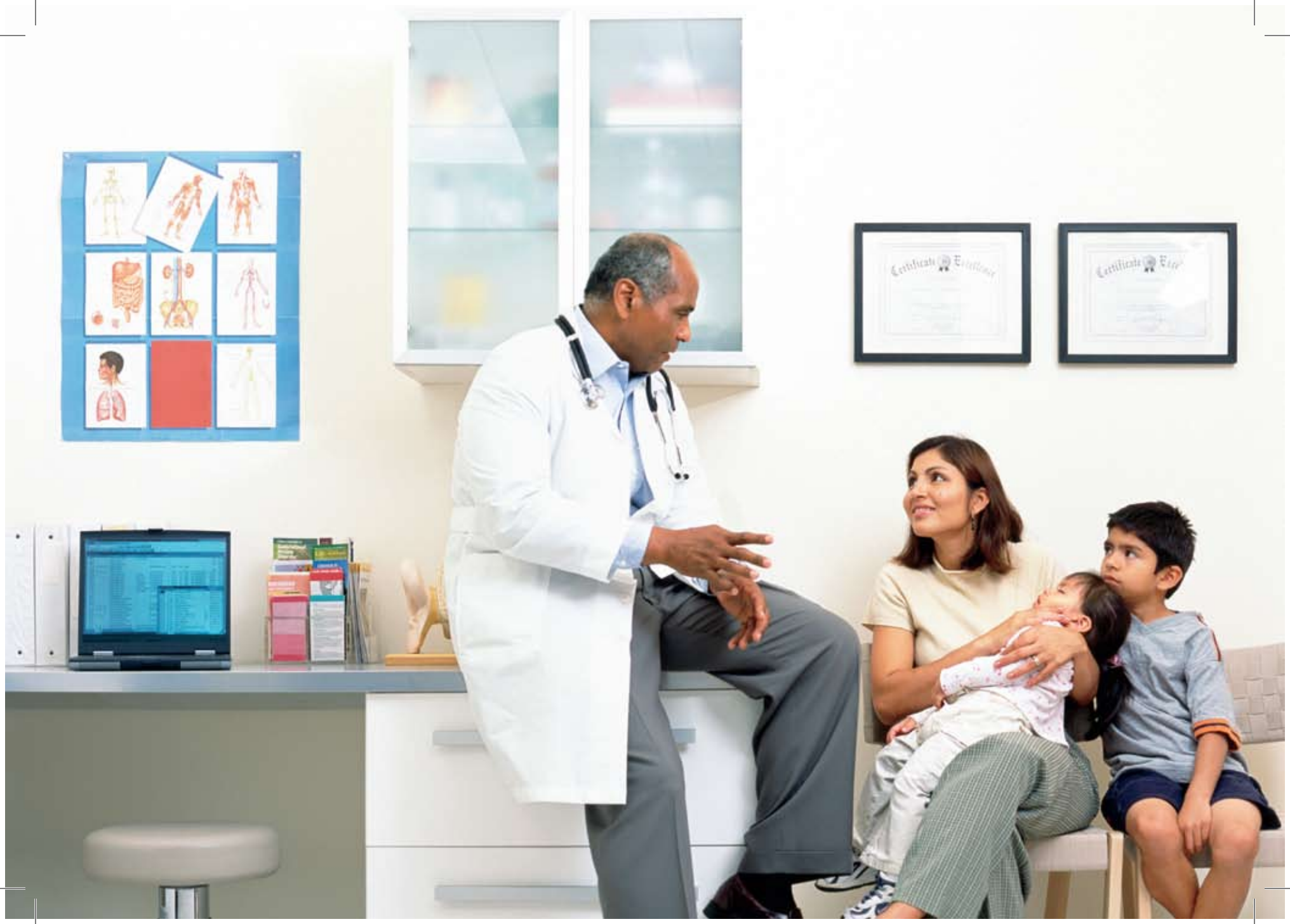


The little book of big health tips #1

How to work as a team with your doctor and pharmacist



Working together for a healthier world™



You know yourself better than anyone. And when it comes to your body, naturally, you want to do the right things to stay healthy—in terms of exercise, diet and lifestyle.

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People are taking a much more active interest in learning how to take care of themselves from all kinds of sources: magazines, books, TV and the Internet.

It's actually a hopeful trend, because by learning, you're empowering yourself. And when you do go to see your doctor, or any medical professional, you'll be able to tell him or her more precisely how you are feeling.

At Pfizer, our goal is to discover and develop medicines to improve the quality of people's lives. But we believe that's just part of the story. We believe that it takes more than medication in order to be truly healthy.

That's what this series is all about. It's designed to help you take charge of your health. It will cover such topics as helping you work as a team with your doctor and pharmacist, as well as eating better, and body & mind health.

This brochure focuses on how to communicate with your healthcare professionals. You will find information on preparing for your doctor's visit, communicating better with your medical professional, coping with a diagnosis, speaking with your pharmacist and more.

We hope it will help guide your journey on the road to better health.



Working together for a healthier world™

Getting the most out of your doctor's visit

The key to a successful appointment is to plan carefully. That's why we've put together this information. It's to help you get the most out of your visit. You'll learn how to prepare for an appointment, how to better communicate with your doctor, as well as steps you can take after your appointment.

Before your appointment: What you can do to prepare

Scheduling

Be schedule smart

Your doctor may have less busy days. Often they are Wednesday or Thursday morning but if you're not sure, then just ask the receptionist if your doctor has any "better suited days" and schedule accordingly.

Be specific

Let the receptionist or medical assistant know if you're booking an annual checkup, a follow-up appointment or if it is regarding a new health concern. When you are specific about why you're making an appointment, this helps the office to set aside the appropriate amount of time needed for your visit and to determine if any special preparation is needed.

Come prepared

Prepare your information

Keep in mind that every appointment has a time limit and you may only get to cover one or two issues. So, keep your list concise and try to focus only on what's most important. If time does run out, book a follow-up appointment.

- Write down your health concerns in order of priority and any symptoms you may be experiencing.

- Write down your questions. It's easy to forget what's on your mind when sitting face-to-face with a professional.
- Bring a list of all the prescription medications and any over-the-counter and herbal remedies you have taken since your last visit.
- You may want to tell your doctor about the details of any important appointments with other healthcare practitioners since your last checkup.

Always bring

- Your provincial or territorial healthcare plan card.
- Your health journal (if you keep one).
- Small pad and pen to take notes.
- Calendar or electronic scheduler to book follow-up appointments or tests.

Dress accordingly

For example, if a problem involves your leg, wear loose trousers for an easier examination.

Bring support

If you have trouble hearing or understanding your doctor or remembering what they said, ask a family member or trusted friend to come with you.

Getting there

- Write all the key information in one place: Review the details of your appointment and write them down ahead of time. Note the location, appointment time and duration, parking arrangements and transportation routes.
- Arrive on time: Make a point of arriving 10-15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Be sure to notify the office if you are delayed or need to cancel your appointment.



During your appointment: Getting the most out of your visit

Keep to your priorities

Discuss the most important matters first, in case time runs out.

Stick to the point

Every appointment has a time limit so make it a priority to focus on your health. If there is extra time, then you can discuss other areas of your life with your doctor—when it seems appropriate.

Be precise

Try to be specific when describing your symptoms. Saying things like “it hurts” does not give your doctor nearly enough information to go on. Instead, try using words like “throbbing”, “dull” or “burning” to describe your pain more accurately. (See the listing elsewhere in this guide for terms you can use.)

Speak up

No problem is too embarrassing to discuss with a healthcare practitioner. From sexual concerns to issues of incontinence, your doctor has heard it all before so don't hold back.

Always be honest

If you are receiving treatment or following a prescription, let the doctor know if you have forgotten or been unable to follow their instructions. If a treatment is not working, this can definitely be a reason why.

Ask for information

Ask your doctor for pamphlets or literature that you and your family members can review at home. Your doctor may also refer you to a website for more information.

Ask questions

Remember to follow your doctor's recommendations and instructions. So, when you're having your appointment, take the time to write down the specific advice you're given. When you're unsure about something, ask questions, and keep a log of new questions to save for your next visit. That way, your doctor will be able to help you better on your next appointment.

Write it down

If the saying “in one ear and out the other” means anything to you, then take notes on what your doctor is telling you. And don't be afraid to ask questions if a medical term or recommendation is unfamiliar or unclear.

Work together with your doctor and other healthcare providers

Doctors work with each other as well as with a professional network of healthcare providers such as specialists, pharmacists, dieticians, nurses, physiotherapists and caregivers. While your doctor receives updates and reports from other members of this team, it's important that you also keep your doctor informed and up-to-date during your visit.

Download your own health journal to
help you document important details.
Visit www.morethanmedication.ca/healthjournal



After your appointment: Steps to follow

Schedule a follow-up

Before you leave the office, book a follow-up appointment if your doctor requests one or if you ran out of time and have more to discuss. If you cannot make it to your appointment, please call to cancel and re-book for a more convenient time.

Do your homework

Review the materials your doctor gave you. If you can't remember something, or if you don't understand your notes, call the office and speak to a member of your healthcare team.

Don't cut corners

Follow your doctor's instructions to the letter—especially regarding follow-up visits, going for tests, getting prescriptions and following any treatment through to the end of its course.

Provide updates

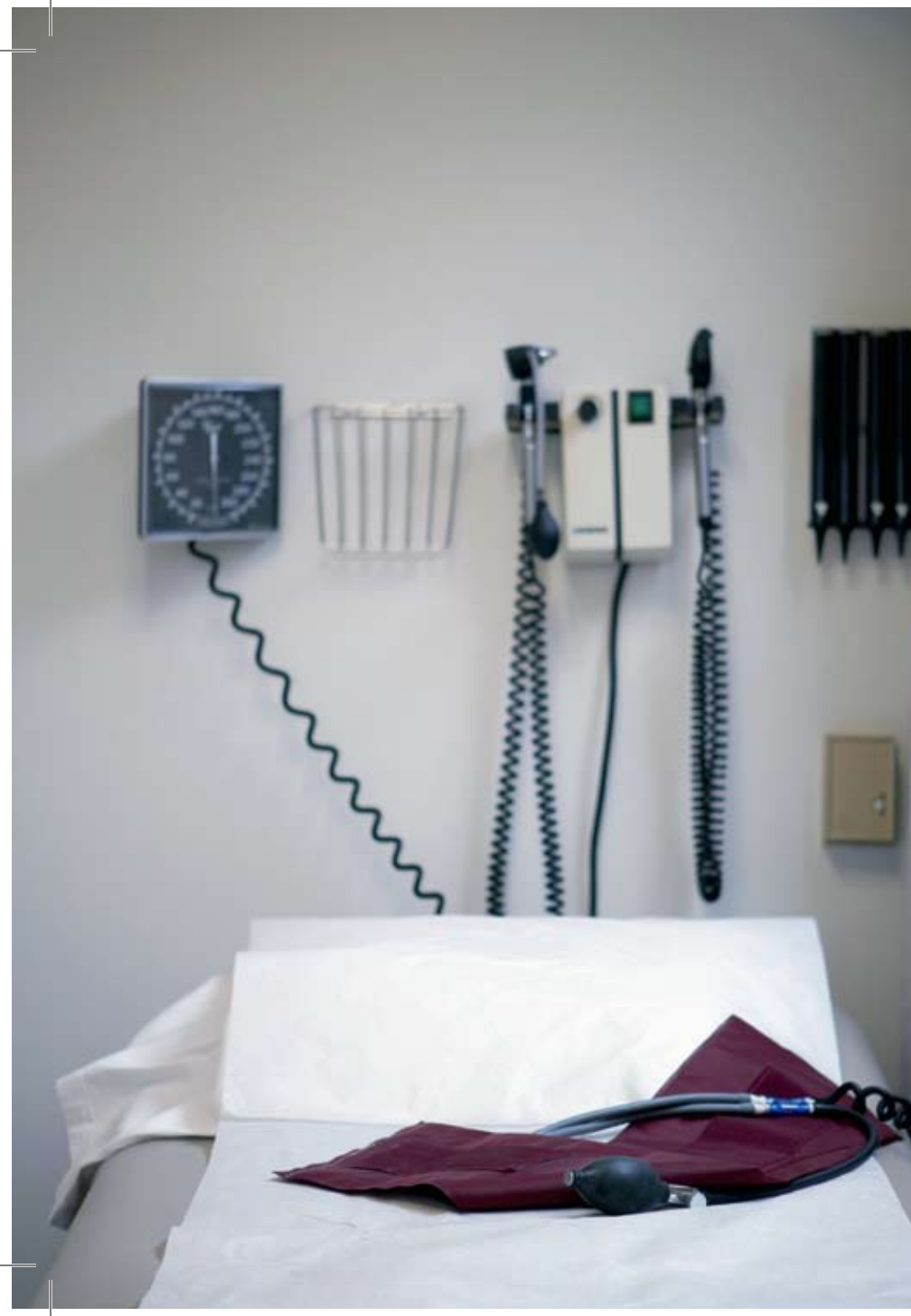
Keep your doctor informed of any changes in your condition and alert them to any side effects you may experience from the medication.

Realize that you may have to pay

Not all services are covered by your health card and your doctor may need to charge for them.

Take it seriously

If your doctor advises you to change your lifestyle in any way, they are telling you for a reason. For the sake of your health, be prepared to make those changes and help take ownership of your health.



Tell your doctor where it hurts

Not all aches and pains are created equal. Some disappear as quickly as they came. Others can lead to sleepless nights or time off work. If your pain warrants a visit to your doctor's office, be prepared to tell them exactly where it hurts and how much.

Your doctor will likely ask you a series of questions about the pain you feel. When did it start? Do you know what caused it? What type of pain do you feel? If you can answer these questions accurately, your doctor will be better able to treat the pain.

Describe your pain for the doctor

Choose from the list below to tell your doctor exactly what kind of pain you are experiencing

Numbness	Dull	Sharp	Burning
Discomfort	Shooting	Stabbing	Tender
Throbbing	Tingling	Cramping	Intermittent

How severe is the pain you feel on a scale of 1-6

- 1 Very mild** (I can perform all of my daily activities without problems)
- 2 Mild** (I usually feel it only when I think about it)
- 3 Moderate** (I cannot perform some of my daily activities)
- 4 Severe** (I cannot perform most of my daily activities)
- 5 Very severe** (I cannot perform any of my daily activities)
- 6 Punishing** (The pain is overwhelming and is all that I feel)

When did the pain start

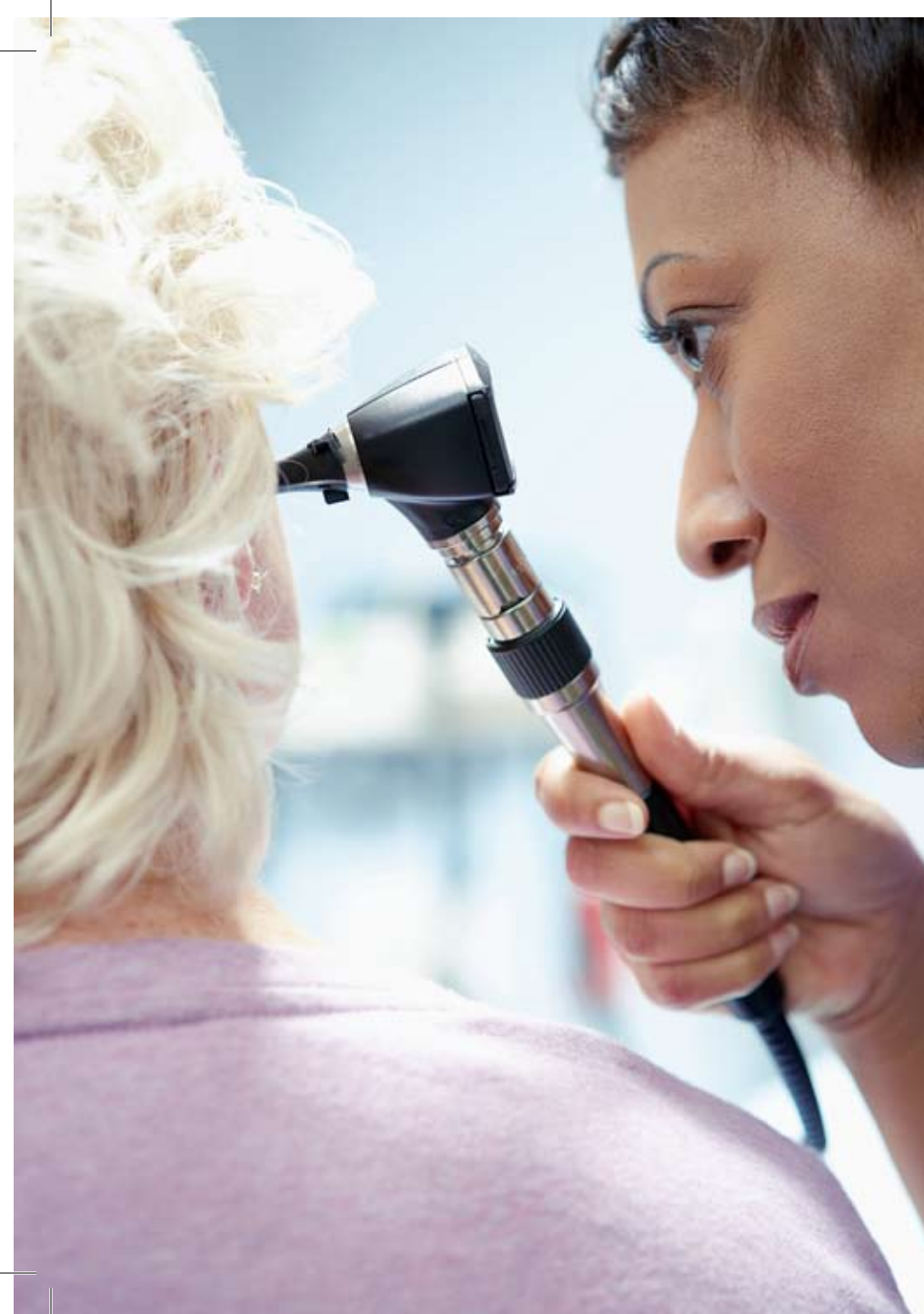
- In the last 24 hours
- 1-3 days ago
- 3-7 days ago
- Over a week ago
- Over a period of months

Get into more detail

- When is the pain at its worst?
(For example, time of day or after eating.)
- When is the pain at its mildest?
- If you know, what caused the pain to begin with?
- What makes the pain worse?
- What makes the pain better?
- Has the pain caused other symptoms?
(For example, loss of sleep or appetite, fatigue.)
- What have you tried to alleviate the pain?
(For example, compresses or over-the-counter medication.)

Not all aches and pains are created equal. If your pain warrants a visit to your doctor's office, be prepared to be precise. This tool will help you do just that. Visit www.morethanmedication.ca/pain





Speaking with your doctor about an embarrassing problem

The human body is a wonderful thing. And it can also be an embarrassing thing. Regardless of what's troubling you, realize that discussing it with your doctor will ultimately provide a huge sense of relief—emotionally and physically.

While you may hesitate to bring up a sensitive issue with your doctor, they have likely heard it all before. You should also remember that the doctor-patient relationship is based on confidentiality and trust. So relax.

If the thought of bringing up awkward subjects like incontinence, excessive gas, sexual dysfunction or memory loss makes you cringe, use these easy steps to break the ice:

1 Admit you're embarrassed

Start the conversation by saying something like, "Doctor, I'm embarrassed about something and find it hard to talk about it." Your doctor is trained in helping you talk about uncomfortable subjects. Start talking and before you know it, they will have a good understanding of your problem and be able to help.

2 Use everyday language

Doctors don't expect you to know the medical or "polite" word for what you're experiencing. In fact, using medical jargon you don't understand may only confuse your doctor. So, use your own words and keep it simple.

3 Practise out loud

Rehearse what you want to say to your doctor—either on your own or with a trusted friend. The more you say it out loud, the easier it'll be when the time comes.

4 Write it down

Some patients find it easier to keep track of their symptoms and give their doctor a written account. For example, if you're embarrassed about bladder control, note the instances when it happens (laughing too hard, when you sneeze). Putting it down on paper means you won't have to actually speak about it and, most importantly, the doctor still gets the message.

5 Get help from a trusted source

To get the conversation started, do your own research and show your doctor a brochure or printed web information about what's troubling you. Most health organizations also provide information on how to speak to your doctor about a particular health problem.

6 Bring support

Having your spouse or partner with you can make you feel more comfortable. They can also help to fill in any information gaps.

7 You're never too old to be healthy

Sometimes we accept certain conditions because we assume it's just part of the aging process. (And that way, we don't need to bring up the subject.) Let your doctor decide what's normal for you. Wouldn't you prefer to do something about it rather than compromise the quality of your life?

Get practical advice from a doctor's point of view, to help you cope with a diagnosis. Watch our video at www.morethanmedication.ca/diagnosisvideo



Keys to coping with a medical diagnosis

Getting a diagnosis is almost sure to affect your life and lifestyle. Whether it's serious or not, you will always want to know exactly what you're up against. It's vital to understand your condition and treatment so that you get the best care possible.

Whether you're awaiting a diagnosis, have just got home from your doctor's office or are starting to digest the reality of your situation, there are steps you can take to make the most of what can be a tough situation. Here are some ways to help yourself deal with a diagnosis:

1 Be honest with your doctor

If you are with your doctor and find the situation or news overwhelming, then tell them so. If you feel stressed, agitated, shocked or panicked, you may not be able to take in the importance of what they are saying. If you don't feel ready, let your doctor know and arrange to come back later in the day or even in a couple of days if that makes more sense.

2 Bring someone with you

If you're getting test results from your doctor, bring along someone you can trust to the appointment—like a close friend or family member. Not only can they offer emotional support, they can also take notes or ask questions on your behalf. If you've been diagnosed and are seeing your doctor about treatment options, your loved one can help ease the burden of making tough decisions on your own.

3 Learn about your condition

Your doctor can recommend resources—in the form of books, DVDs or websites—that provide helpful information about your condition and recommended treatment. In the latter instance, remember that there can be almost too much information on the Internet, so let your healthcare team point you in the right direction.

4 Know that you are not alone

There are many health associations and organizations that focus on specific conditions and the people it affects. Ask your doctor to recommend one that can provide you with the right kind of support and information. Often, these associations can also put you in touch with a support group—either in your community or online.

5 Plan to make lifestyle changes

Once you know the facts and are ready to make a decision about treatment, think about how your life may change and what you'll need to do to adjust. For example, ask your doctor or specialist if you'll need someone to drive you to and from treatments, if you'll need to be hospitalized or whether you'll need home services. Very likely, there is a social services agency in your area that can help you deal with these very things.

Questions about diagnosis and treatment

Bring this list of questions to your next doctor's appointment and carry a notepad and pen to take down the answers. The more you learn about your diagnosis, the more questions you may have—so keep a running list of questions to ask your doctor.

- 1 What is the medical name for my condition? (This is very important if you plan to research your condition.)
- 2 What is the cause of my condition?
- 3 Do you recommend that I get a second opinion from another specialist?
- 4 What is the treatment for my condition? Do I have a choice of treatments? If so, what are they?
- 5 How long does the treatment last?
- 6 Is this condition treatable with medication?
- 7 What medication will I need?
- 8 How long will I need to take it?
- 9 Will I need to make temporary changes to my life during treatment? For example, do I need to book time off work or find someone to help care for my children?
- 10 What lifestyle changes should I make in order to help control my condition?
- 11 Can you recommend resources so that I can better understand my condition?
- 12 Other questions I want to ask:

Visit morethanmedication.ca to find support in your area.



Finding quality health information on the Internet

Search the Web for information on any health and wellness issues and you're likely to generate hundreds of hits. That's just the nature of Internet search engines—it's information overload every time. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to figure out which websites offer a genuine source of reliable information and which ones are better off trashed.

Eight pointers for healthy surfing

Follow these basic rules of thumb to help you search more wisely and rate the information you find while staying clear of cyber-traps along the way:

1 Search smart

When you type a word or medical term into a search engine field, the results or hits are not usually ranked in order of quality or relevance. Some hits are actually “sponsored links” that are purchased by a company to appear at the top of the list. These links take you to a commercial site that's trying to sell you something—rather than provide quality unbiased information.

2 Know who sponsors the site

If the website doesn't clearly tell you who sponsors the site, ignore it. Most reputable sites—like those from government agencies, hospitals and health organizations—identify themselves right up front on the home page. If you're uncertain, check the “about us” section to see exactly who sponsors the site.

3 Check that the information or website is not out of date

Healthcare professionals are continually making new advances in treatment for many medical conditions. If you can't tell when the online information was written or produced, then it could be old news—and that isn't good enough when it comes to your health. Check for a date, “last updated” or copyright date to ensure that what you're reading is current.

4 Check that the website uses an editorial or advisory board

This helps to ensure that the site presents a variety of informed perspectives about health and wellness and that a board of dedicated professionals supports the quality of the site content.

5 Ensure that the site offers a clear privacy policy

If additional information is offered via email, or if registration is required to access some or all parts of the website, then a clear privacy policy must be in place. That way you'll know how your information is going to be used and if it will be given to other companies or organizations. If a privacy policy doesn't exist, if you don't agree with it or if it's too complicated to understand, do not provide any personal information to the site.

6 See if you have the opportunity to provide feedback

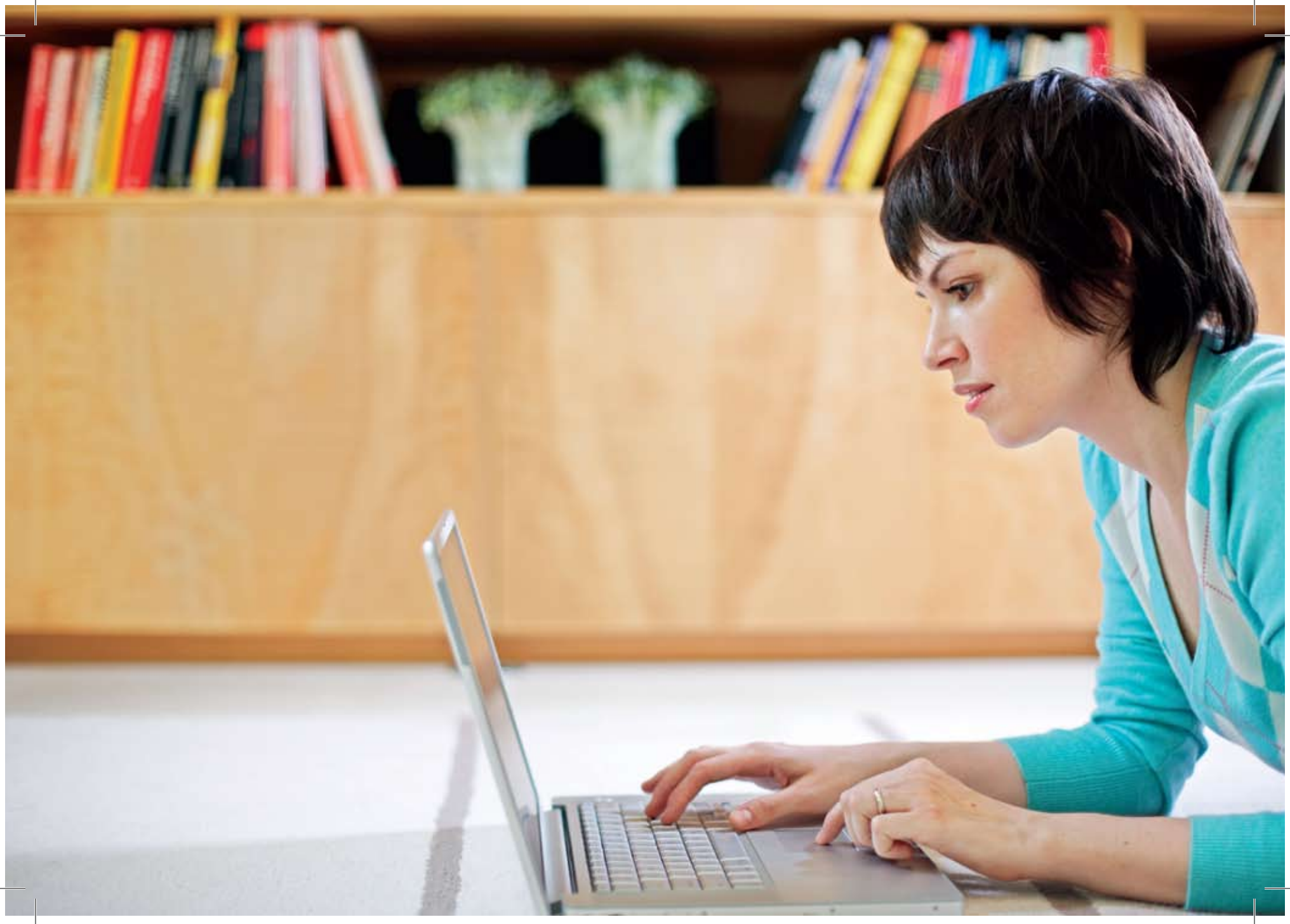
A site that's dedicated to being relevant will ask you for your feedback on topics of interest to you. That way, the site is more likely to keep updating its content to remain relevant to its readers.

7 Check to see that Canada-specific information is provided

In some cases, it matters that Canadian sources were used to create the information on the site. For example, when it comes to nutrition, *Canada's Food Guide* contains information that is quite different from the guides of other countries since it considers our Canadian lifestyle.

8 Know that no website is a substitute for your doctor

Only you and your doctor can decide what is best for your health. Any good website will recognize the importance of your relationship with your doctor and state that the information presented is no substitute for professional advice. Try asking your doctor to recommend one or more websites for your concerns. And if you find something online that interests you, print it out and bring it along to your next appointment.



Online support groups: What you need to know

When you're diagnosed with a health condition, you can't help but feel alone—but you don't have to. If you want feedback from fellow individuals who know first-hand what you're going through, support groups can be a great resource.

Joining a local support group in your own city is also a good way to find comfort, information and understanding. You can find a list of organizations in your area at morethanmedication.ca under “find a local resource”. If you'd like to learn more about online support groups, read on.

Online groups are convenient, usually free of charge and only take up as much time as you want them to. You do, however, need to be careful about which group you join.

Your online support group checklist

With most online groups, you'll be able to review some or all discussion threads without being a member. Before you join, take time to review what members are talking about and how they interact with one another. Use this checklist to ensure that the group you join is worth your time—and your trust.

- **The group is affiliated with a recognized national or provincial health organization.** Some reputable health organizations will provide an area on their site for an online support group. These groups tend to be long-standing and are moderated.
- **The group is moderated in a professional manner.** Some are moderated by a health professional, association staff or a long-time member. Whatever the case, you want to make sure the moderator is active enough to patrol group abusers (such as those who monopolize conversations, use profane language or insult other members) yet still allow healthy conversations to flourish without interference.
- **Group guidelines have been established.** Check the “frequently asked questions (FAQs)” or “about us” section for published group guidelines. Guidelines may include information about starting discussion threads, language and tone to be used and information on how to express concern if members ignore the rules. Guidelines show that thought has been put into how the group should operate—always a good sign.
- **The group isn't funded for commercial gain.** Hosting an online support group isn't free. Someone must be paying for the hosting, functionality and technology behind the online group. Check to see if the group discloses who sponsors it. If it doesn't, then think twice about joining since you could be faced with unwanted advertising for a particular product through postings or through email.
- **Your anonymity is guaranteed.** When you post or reply to a post, none of your personal information should be displayed. If anything, your user name or screen name will appear but nothing else. Also, be careful that you don't give away personal information inadvertently when posting or replying.
- **The group doesn't try to replace your doctor.** An online support group should never replace your doctor. Members should never recommend that you go off treatment or change the treatment prescribed by your doctor, even if that member had a positive experience with another method. If you do find interesting information posted, ask your doctor about it but don't assume that what worked for one person will work for you. That's for you and your doctor to decide.

Learn from a medical expert what to look for when using the Internet to find health and wellness information. Watch our video at www.morethanmedication.ca/findhealthinfo



Caregiving: Working with a healthcare professional while caring for others

If you are caring for an elderly or ill family member, you may face challenges you never expected. While being a caregiver can be satisfying and challenging, it can also be stressful—especially if you are doing it alone. You may opt instead to work with a doctor and become an integral part of a caregiving team.

Your new responsibilities may include giving medications, planning and providing care and support, becoming an advocate, organizing professional caregivers and communicating with medical and other healthcare professionals.

One of your most important responsibilities is to **gather information**—about the illness and treatment options, as well as the instructions and recommendations of primary physicians and medical specialists.

Equally important is to **provide information** to the healthcare team. Since you are the one who will likely spend more time with the person in your care than anyone else, you become the eyes and ears of the doctor. It is up to you to report on the patient's symptoms, behaviour and progress so that healthcare providers can recommend and implement sound medical and care decisions.

How to keep track

Try to be as observant and accurate as possible and consider keeping a notebook—either a diary or recording device. Otherwise, it can be too easy to let potentially important information slip between the cracks.

- **Organize it.** If using a written handbook, write down recommendations and treatment advice from the doctor in one section or on one side of the page. Record your observations about the patient on the other side. Be as specific as you can, and date and time all entries.
- **Take it with you.** Your notebook or recording device should accompany you to every appointment with your healthcare professionals, so that you can ask and answer questions.
- **Keep it all together.** The doctor may refer your loved one to other health or caregiving professionals. Record all names and phone numbers, so that all the information is in one place.

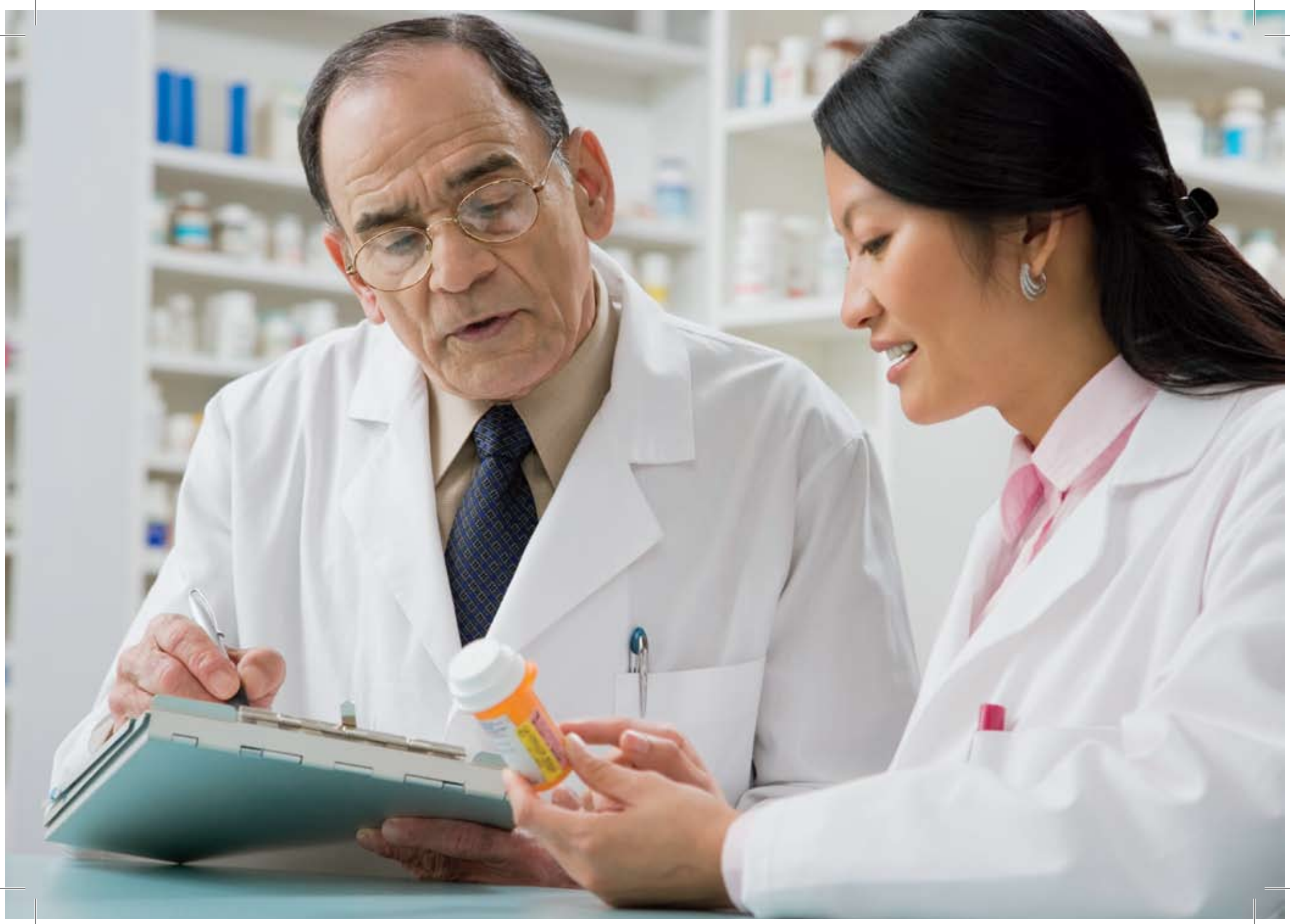
- **Compare notes.** You may also find it helpful to compare observations with others who are assisting with the care. While you might not think that certain observations are important, when you put things together, you may notice significant patterns that should be reported.

Write everything down

Here are examples of the types of observations you might record, depending on the nature of the condition and the circumstances:

- Changes or improvements in general physical health and emotional well-being, and specific complaints or symptoms.
- Changes or improvements in your loved one's behaviours, habits or abilities.
- Symptoms of depression or other mood-related symptoms that you observe.
- Questions that your loved one is asking or issues that appear to be troubling them.
- Inability or refusal to follow doctor's directions regarding medication or lifestyle modifications.
- Details of any incidents when medication has been consistently missed.
- Results of any observations or measurements you need to administer, such as home blood pressure or home blood glucose monitoring.
- Observations, concerns or questions that you think of now, but can wait until the next medical appointment to ask.
- Things that you don't understand or are uncertain of in the care routine, such as instructions regarding medication, meals, activities, dressings and other treatment.

Remember: You are an important member of the caregiving team whose contribution is essential to helping the healthcare professionals do their best.



The right way to work with your pharmacist

It takes a team of healthcare professionals to help us look after your health. Pharmacists are an integral part of that team with specialized university degrees, licenses and advanced knowledge about drugs.

It's important to develop a close relationship with a pharmacist so that all of your health and wellness needs are being met. You can do this by introducing yourself to a particular pharmacist and using them for all your prescription medication needs and to ask about non-prescription medications you may need to buy.

Get the best “over-the-counter” (OTC) medication guidance

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications, or non-prescription drugs, are part of our daily lives. Whether you use them to fight a seasonal cold or a nasty case of athlete's foot, you need to know the right treatment.

Here's how your pharmacist can help

- Advise you on **when to see your doctor** rather than rely on OTC drugs or self-care.
- **Relieve your confusion** over the many non-prescription drug choices on pharmacy shelves.
- Help you choose the **safest** and **most effective** option for **your own situation**.
- Instruct you on **how to take non-prescriptions drugs** the right way.
- Advise you on **other** home care products, such as a home blood pressure monitor, or how to wrap a tensor bandage when your knee acts up after a workout.
- Inform you about **natural remedies**—what works, what doesn't and how to use them safely.

Get expert prescription medication knowledge

When your doctor prescribes medication, your pharmacist can provide important additional information. In some cases, they will also consult with your doctor so that you get the best treatment available. They also create your medication patient profile and follow up on your situation so that you avoid taking drug combinations that could do more harm than good.

Here's how your pharmacist can help

- Provide **professional advice** about the medication you've been prescribed.
- Advise on **how to take your medication**—with or without food, time of day and so on. Your pharmacist will likely give you detailed, printed information about any prescription medication your doctor recommends.
- Alert you to possible **side effects** and what to do about them.
- Ensure the **combination of medications** (both prescription and non-prescription) do not cause any problems.
- **Keep a record of all the prescription medications** you are taking. This is important when completing your health journal and if you ever plan on moving and finding a new pharmacist.
- **Address your worries or concerns** over drug recalls or when the drug you may be taking hits the headlines.

Ask your pharmacist

Whether you're taking OTC or prescription medication, or a combination of the two, your health and wellness will only benefit if you ask your pharmacist the right questions. Remember, these questions are important to ask for both types of drugs and even when you're not sure what to do about a certain symptom or condition.

- Should I see my doctor about this or can you help?
- What is this drug meant to do?
- How should I take this drug?
- When should I take this medication?
- What are the possible side effects?
- If I experience side effects, what should I do?
- How will I know when this drug expires?
- Should I avoid certain activities (such as driving)?
- Should I avoid certain foods (such as dairy and grapefruit)?
- Can you provide me with a list of prescribed medications that I'm taking?
- When should I call my doctor?

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