

Questions to Ask your Doctor

The following information is adapted from:

<https://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/patient-involvement/ask-your-doctor/index.html>

Taking steps before your medical appointments will help you to make the most of your time with your doctor and health care team.

Before the Appointment - Prepare your questions

Time is limited during doctor visits. Prepare for your appointment by thinking about what you want to do during your next visit. Do you want to:

- Talk about a health problem?
- Get or change a medicine?
- Get medical tests?
- Talk about surgery or treatment options?

Write down your questions to bring to your appointment, and work out which are the most important. See below for some ideas of questions to ask, alternatively use the question builder tool found on www.ahrq.gov (see below).

During Your Appointment

Make sure to ask the questions you prepared before your appointment. Start by asking the ones that are most important to you.

Asking questions is important but so is making sure you hear—and understand—the answers you get. Take notes. Or bring someone to your appointment to help you understand and remember what you heard. If you don't understand or are confused, ask your doctor to explain the answer again.

It is very important to understand the plan or next steps that your doctor recommends. Ask questions to make sure you understand what your doctor wants you to do.

After Your Appointment

Your doctor may have you fill a prescription or make an appointment for tests, lab work, or a follow-up visit.

It is important to call your doctor if you are unclear about any instructions or have more questions.

Create a list of follow-up questions to ask if you:

- Have a health problem
- Need to get or change a medicine
- Need a medical test
- Need to have surgery

Other times to call your doctor

There are other times when you should follow up on your care and call your doctor. Call your doctor:

- If you experience any side effects or other problems with your medicines.
- If your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor.
- If you receive any new prescriptions or start taking any over-the-counter medicines.
- To get results of any tests you've had. Do not assume that no news is good news.
- To ask about test results you do not understand.

Possible Questions to Ask:

To talk about a health problem

- What is my diagnosis?
- Will I need any more tests?
- What are my treatment options?
- How soon do I need to make a decision about treatment?
- How much does this treatment cost?

To get or change a medicine

- What is the name of the medicine?
- What is the medicine for?
- Can I take a generic?
- When should I take it?
- How much should I take?
- How long do I need to take the medicine?
- Are there side effects?
- Do I need to avoid any food, drinks, or activities?

- Are there any side effects?
- What happens if I choose to not have treatment?
- What is the outlook for my future (prognosis)?
- Will I need special help at home?

- What should I do if I forget to take my medicine?
- What should I do if I accidentally take more than the recommended dose?
- Should I get a refill?
- Should I stop taking any of my other medicines or vitamins?
- Is there written information I can have?

To Get Medical Tests

- What is the test for?
- How is the test done?
- How accurate is the test?
- Is this test the only way to find out that information?

- What do I need to do to prepare for the test?
- When will I get the results?
- What will the results tell me?
- What's the next step after the test?

To talk about surgery

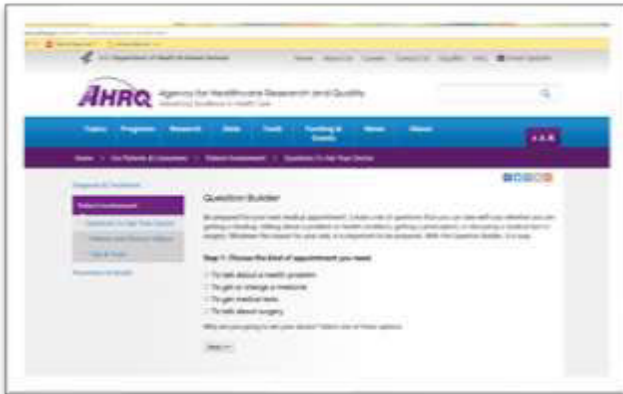
- Why do I need surgery?
- Is there some other way to treat my condition?
- What kind of surgery do I need?
- Have you done this surgery before?
- Which hospital is best for this surgery?

- Will I need anaesthesia?
- How long will it take me to recover?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- What will happen after the surgery?
- What will happen if I wait or don't have this surgery?

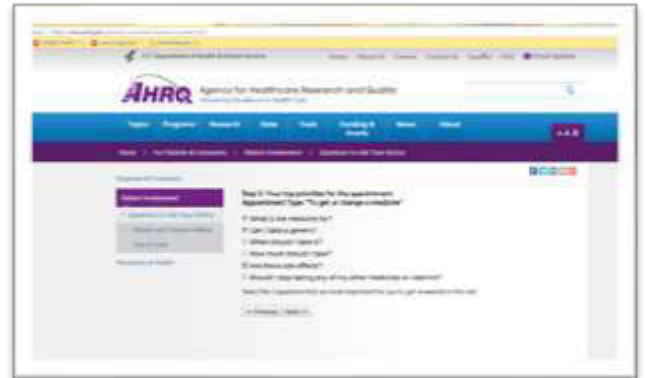
Question Builder Tool

Found at: <https://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/question-builder.html>

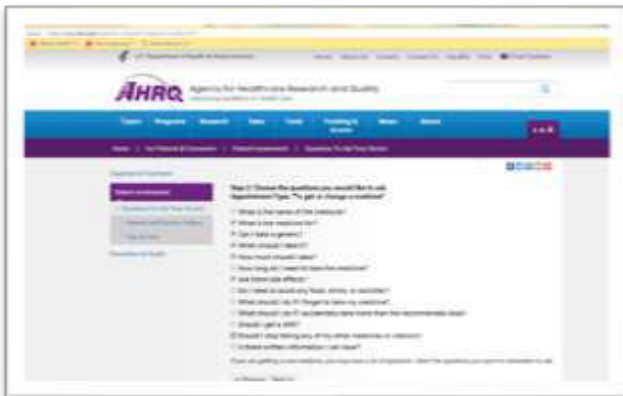
Step 1: Select the type of appointment you need



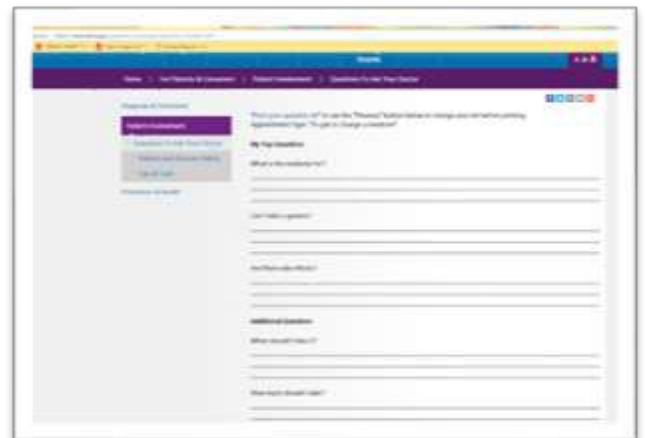
Step 3: Select Priorities:



Step 2: Select your Questions:



Step 4: Generate Question Sheet:



Step 5: Print out Question Sheet