

# Being An Active Player with Your Health & Doctor

## *What does it mean to be an active player with your health?*

Being an active player about your health means that you are talking to your doctor and doing your best to receive and follow the right care. This can look like scheduling your doctors appointments, taking medications as prescribed, asking questions specifically about your health, and tracking how you are feeling.

When you work with your doctor and follow recommendations, you can set yourself up to receive the care that you need to live independently and healthily. Talking to your doctor and building a partnership with them can guide you to your best health possible.



## *Why should I be an active player with my health?*

Being an active player for your health will allow you to feel in control of your life and health. You may be able to make better informed decisions about your health by asking the right questions and understanding your plan. Some tasks, such as taking your medication, may be crucial to managing your health and taking priority. This can play a large role in your body's ability to stay active and well.



When talking to a doctor about your health or your medications and the reasons why you are taking them, it is important to ask questions so that you can fully understand. If at



any time you are confused about any of the medications, recommendations, or overall general plan for your specific health, have courage to ask your doctor so they can explain. You should ask questions to learn more about your health and if you ever become not sure/worried or are experiencing side effects, such as drowsiness, nausea, dizziness, heart issues, or diarrhea. It is important to take your medications as they are prescribed for managing your health, treating temporary conditions or symptoms, and overall long-term health and well-being. Your medication will not work unless you take it.

Your involvement about your health can help strengthen effectiveness and result in overall better outcomes. This positive attitude can come from communicating with your doctor so that you can gain a better view of why you take certain medications or have specific recommendations to follow. Understanding and caring about your health will support you towards practicing healthy behaviors, and in the long run make you feel better and live your life.

## ***How do I become a more active participant in my health?***



Asking questions so that you better understand your health will help you understand your health plan and keep you engaged with making healthy decisions. When you're visiting your doctor, be prepared ahead of time. This may look like taking medications with you or bringing a support person. Bringing someone with you as many advantages, such as: they can also ask questions, give you a ride to your appointment, or listen to what the doctor explains to help you remember. Preparing a list of questions or concerns ahead of time so that you do not forget during your appointment. Here are a few examples of questions you can ask your doctor:

- "Can you explain my health and condition a little more?"
- "What can I expect over time?"
- "I don't understand how I'm supposed to take this."
- "What resources do you recommend I could learn from online?"
- "I'm experiencing \_\_\_\_ symptoms."
- "I feel like my medications are making me feel worse."



**When talking to a doctor about your health it is important to ask questions.**

Keep your medications organized to help monitor your medications to prevent errors such as missing medication or taking too much, and it can help you monitor the timing of medication so that they don't interfere with the other ones that you are taking. Some medications could have reactions to certain foods, food supplements, and other medications, so it is important to know beforehand what to stay away from. Here are a few tips to keep you organized:



01

**Make a list of each medication that you are taking.** This list can include other information such as the generic name of the medication, how much to take, when to take, any side effects this medication may cause, and the expiration date. This is also a good way to keep track of any symptoms or side effects that you may be experiencing. Take notes and use these at your next doctor's visit so that they can know how your body is reacting to the medication and if this medication is right for you.

02

**Use a medication organizer.** These containers separate pills by the day or morning/afternoon they are meant to be taken. At the beginning of each week, you can place the exact number of pills into its designated spot so that you know exactly which ones to take. Taking a quick glance at the medication organizer can let you know if you have missed any medication, and it can help prevent overdosing. At the beginning of each week, check to see how much medication you have left; you don't want to run out. If you see the bottle becoming low, make it a priority to contact your doctor that week so that you can get your prescription refilled. Plan ahead and do not wait until the last minute to get your medication refilled.

03

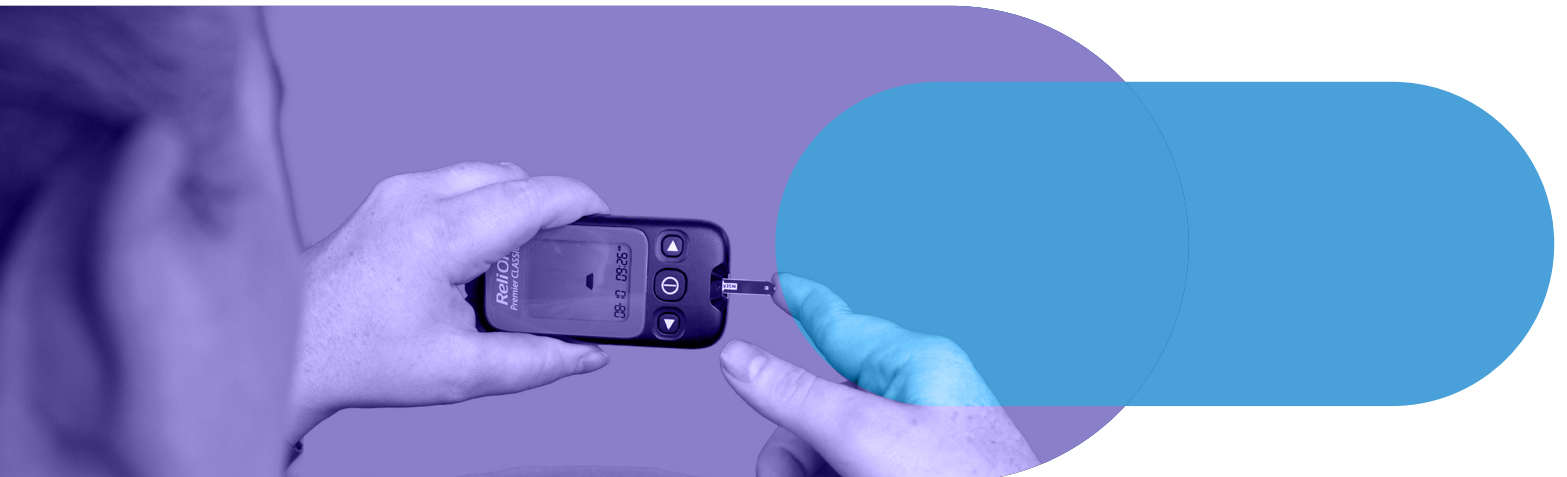
**If you plan on traveling, remember to take your medication with you.** Set a reminder by putting a note on your luggage or setting a reminder on your phone. Carry your medication with you instead of putting it in your checked bags if you are flying. Also, be sure to bring a copy or picture of your prescription in your carry-on or on your phone just in case you lose your medication.

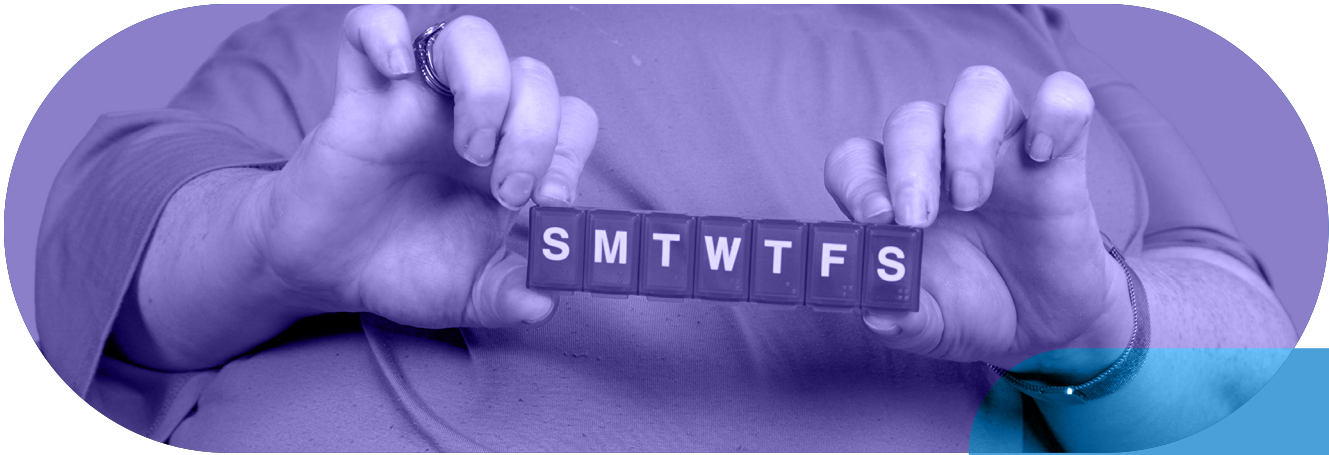
04

**Set a reminder to take medications throughout the day.** Use a sticky note or your phone to notify you when it is time to take your medication. If you have a smartphone, there are apps that you can download or use to help remind you. Having other people remind you to take your medication can help prevent error. This could be someone in your household, a friend, or caregiver/support person.

*As you are become organized and are following your plan, be sure to ask appropriate questions to make sure you understand. Here are some examples:*

- What is the medication for?
- Can you explain to me why I am taking this?
- How do I take it and how often?
- Should I take my medication with food or on an empty stomach?
- Are there going to be side effects?
- How long will the side effects last?
- Are there any side effects specific to my disability?
- Will my insurance cover the cost of the medication? If no, How much does it cost?
- Where do I get the medication?
- Will I need to change my diet or exercise plan?
- How long will I be on this medication for?
- What should I do if I miss taking my medication?





Tips for taking multiple medications:

- Make a list of all your medications
- Know what each medication is for and what side effects to watch for
- Keep track of any side effects that you may be experiencing
- Know when you will run out of medication
- Know what to do if you miss your medication
- Make sure your medications aren't expired

Keep a notebook to help stay organized! Cross out any medications you are no longer actively taking.

<i>Medication name:</i>	<i>Generic name:</i>	<i>How much to take:</i>	<i>When to take:</i>	<i>Side effects:</i>	<i>Expiration date:</i>

# Let's GO!

**How do you feel about your partnership with your doctor?**

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**Name at least one way to help you remember to take your medication.**

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**What are some questions you'd like to ask your doctor or health coach?**

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