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- Preparing for an appointment can help individuals get the best care possible.
- Some information to prepare includes symptoms, side effects or other concerns, treatment goals, and an up-to-date list of medications.
- Keeping a diary can help individuals stay organized both before and during the appointment.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions during an appointment.
- If in between appointments, it is important to ask the health care team how to best reach them.
- Make a plan with your healthcare team for what to do in an emergency.

What is a follow-up appointment?¹

A follow-up appointment is a chance for the health care team to check in on an individual since the last appointment. Follow-up appointments help promote a good relationship between an individual and their health care team and are important to making adjustments needed to improve care.

What notes should you prepare for an appointment?^{2,3}

- Symptoms (Examples: feeling hopeless, difficulty sleeping, weight changes, etc.)
- Short-term and long-term medication side effects (Examples: muscle movements, sleepiness, constipation, etc.)
- Personal treatment goals
- Worries and concerns
- An up-to-date list of medications

What are some appointment preparation tips?^{2,3}

- Keeping a diary of thoughts and feelings and bringing the diary to appointments can help individuals stay organized.
- Being specific and including as many details as possible can help the health care team better understand the individual's experience.
- Examples: when did the symptoms start, how severe are the symptoms, how often do the symptoms happen, have the symptoms changed
- If there are more than a few things to talk about, it is helpful to write them in order of how important they are. During an appointment, talk about the most important things first.
- If your health care team uses an online portal (i.e. MyChart), consider sending updates through the portal ahead of the appointment.

What questions should you ask during an appointment?

- What is this medication for?
- How long will it take for the medication to start working?
- How and when do I take this medication? (Examples: with or without food, morning or night)
- What symptoms will this medication address?
- What short-term and long-term side effects may occur?
- What blood work will need to be done?
- When is the next appointment?

How can you reach the health care team?⁴

- The easiest way is to talk with a provider during planned appointments.
- Talk with your health care team to know the best way to reach them in between appointments, if needed (Examples: telephone, email, smartphone apps, etc.)
- Make a plan with your health care team for what to do in an emergency.

Why is it important to prepare for an appointment?

- Preparing for an appointment can help make more effective and efficient use of your appointment time.
- Preparing notes ahead of time can provide confidence that concerns will be communicated during the appointment.
- Working together with the health care team can help individuals get the best care possible.



Go online to find more information and to view the references for this toolkit.

aapp.org/555616