How to Take Charge of Your Health Care

Taking care of your health sometimes means more than going to your yearly physical. As you age, you may start getting more aches and pains and developing more serious conditions that require seeing specialists. So how do you advocate for the best care for yourself? Here is some advice to get you through your next medical appointments:

Save Your Medical Records

When going to see a doctor or specialist, make sure you take all your important medical information with you. If you don't want to carry a large folder containing your records, you can scan or take a picture of them, then upload and convert the file on your iPad into a Portable Document Format or PDF. Take your device with you to your appointments and share your records with the people who need to see them. The advantage of a PDF is its reliable formatting, keeping the layout and content identical on any device you're viewing it on. And thanks to its small size, a PDF document can easily be shared in an email. So save your family medical history, your personal health record, and a comprehensive medication list on PDFs; you won't have to worry about missing any information at your next doctor's visit.

Ask a Friend to Accompany You

Doctors' appointments can be stressful, especially when you don't know what to expect. If you're dreading bad news, or if you're worried about your test results or diagnosis, ask a trusted friend or family member to go to your appointment with you. Besides helping you feel more at ease with their comforting presence, they may bring up some questions or concerns to your physician that you may not have thought about or that you're just too worried or overwhelmed to remember. Ask the person accompanying you if they don't mind taking notes while the doctor is explaining your condition and recommending treatment or course of action. Once you're back home, you can call on them to remind you of what you've learned during the appointment, what medications you need, and what your next steps are in order to take care of your medical or physical issues.

Get a Second Opinion

If you have a complex health condition, your GP will probably send you to see a specialist. But how confident can you be in their diagnosis? Getting a second opinion is always a good idea before starting any life-altering treatment or taking powerful medication. You'll feel more in control of your health, better educated regarding your medical condition, and you'll be able to have more of a say regarding your options. Additionally, try to maintain a healthy lifestyle even as you look for answers to your medical issues by keeping up with your fitness routine, eating healthy meals, and getting enough sleep at night. Poor diet, lack of exercise, and not enough restorative sleep all contribute to heightened levels of stress, irritability, and moodiness. They can also lead to diseases and health problems, as well as cause cognitive issues.

If you want to be an advocate for your own health, get regular checkups, strive to lead a healthy lifestyle, and keep your medical records in order. Find a team of doctors and specialists you trust, and try to learn as much as you can about your condition. And if you need help and some positive vibes in your health journey, find a support group and share stories with others.

At stomaheroes.com, we aim to bring awareness and positive energy, and we believe you shouldn't feel alone on your journey. So come read stories from fellow Ostomates, and share your own experiences with us.

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