How to Prepare for a Doctor's Appointment: A Guide for Seniors

By Joseph Badolato, DO, Medical Director, FamilyCare Health

Everyone's been there: You spend days thinking about your appointment with your doctor. But when the day finally arrives, you feel rushed and leave with unanswered questions. Having a basic plan for a doctor's appointment can help reduce any feelings of anxiety and also make sure you get the most out of your visit.

Here are four suggestions to help your optimize your time with your doctor. By following these basic tips, you'll get the most out of your visit and have less anxiety

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about it leading up to the appointment.

Tip 1: Make a List

Write down all the things you'd like to discuss with your doctor. Prioritize your list from most important to least so you make sure to cover the things that are most pressing to you. Bring the list with you to

your appointment and leave space so you can write down anything you learn.

Tip 2: Bring Important Info

When you see your doctor, bring all of your prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, and supplements. Also, remember your insurance card and any medical records from the past year. These should

include any notes about any recent illness, operation, or condition plus contact information for the doctors who treated you.

Tip 3: Check Your Understanding

It's not only important that you get to ask your questions. You also need to really understand the answers you receive. If you don't fully comprehend what your doctor

is saying, ask for clarification. If you regularly use glasses or hearing aids, make sure you bring these with you. If you want, you can always ask your doctor to speak more slowly or explain something further.

Tip 4: Invite a Friend

Two sets of ears and eyes are better than one! Discuss your appointment ahead of time with the family member or

friend who will be joining you, letting them know what you want to get out of the visit. Your friend can remind you if you forget something and can take notes about what the doctor says.

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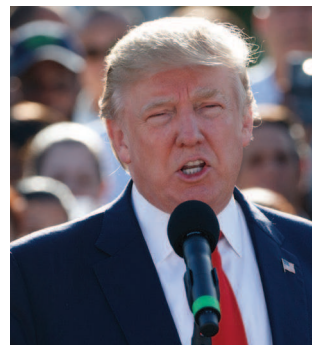
with consumers.

CLINTON: She has proposed a new tax credit of up to $5,000 per family, or $2,500 for an individual, for households that face "excessive" out-of-pocket costs. The credit would be refundable, meaning that people who don't owe income tax could still get money back. An independent analysis of her plan defined "excessive" costs as

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during an campaign event with employees at Trump National Doral, Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2016, in Miami.

exceeding 5 percent of household income.

Clinton would also require insurers to cover three sick visits to the doctor each year without patients needing first to meet their plan's deductible, the annual amount patients pay before their insurance kicks in.

TRUMP: He has no similar proposals on out-of-pocket expenses but has called for requiring hospitals, clinics and doctors to disclose prices so patients can shop around to reduce costs. And he would expand the use of tax-sheltered health savings accounts, used to pay for medical expenses not covered by insurance.

PRESCRIPTION

DRUGS

More than half of U.S. adults take prescription drugs, and according to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll most of those patients report no major problems affording their own medications.

But consumers have been alarmed by the introduction of breakthrough drugs costing tens of thousands of dol-

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at a rally at Broward College in Coconut Creek, Fla., Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2016.

lars a year, along with a spate of seemingly random price hikes for older medications. More than 3 out of 4 say the cost of prescription drugs is unreasonable. A majority favors government action to curb costs.

CLINTON: She has several proposals, including a new government board with the power to penalize drug companies for "unjustified, outlier price increases," a monthly limit of $250 on patients' copayments for prescription drugs, lowering the period of protection from generic competition for biologic drugs from 12 years to 7 years, and requiring drug companies to provide rebates for medications used by low-income Medicare recipients.