

Tips for Supporting Self Advocacy in Health Care

- Use the Taking Charge of My Health Care Toolkit created by the Oregon Office on Disability and Health
- Prepare for your health care appointments. The following tools can help you do this.
- Supplemental tools to help you prepare and communicate.
- How to prepare for a doctor's appointment from the National Institute on Aging .
- My Health Passport has a variety of prompts to help you communicate with your provider and tell them what you need. In addition to health care information, prompts include how you deal with pain, the best way to help you when stressed, and how you cope with medical procedures.
- Today's Health Care Visit has a list of prompts to help you think through the types of information that you need when you leave.
- Take a support person with you to your appointment to take notes.
- Ask your doctor to pause, clarify, draw a picture, repeat information or whatever you need to help you better understand.
- Do not look at statistics related to your diagnosis. They do not reflect your specific information and can cause anxiety.
- Only visit reputable websites like the American Cancer Society and remember that treatment options are continually making strides so information you see online may not be 100% up to date.
- Set a timer when doing internet research so you don't go down a rabbit hole.
- Give yourself permission to ask for what you need to feel relaxed, such as requesting a particular medical professional, proper sized gown, etc.
- If you are scared or have a history of anxiety state this to your provider. Sharing that information helps everyone to meet you where you are at and better support you.
- Stay organized and keep your medical info, questions, etc in one notebook and bring it with you to your appointments.
- Have a go to person on your care team that really gets you and listens.
- Create a list of terms with their definitions that you can access easily while you're learning the lingo.
- Remember that you know yourself best!

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