

Take PART

Prepare

Keep track of your symptoms, and monitor what's going on between visits to your provider.

- **Example:** Are your symptoms better, worse, the same; are changes slow or rapid; has anything else changed in your life to affect you.
Be sure to write all of this down along with what you have been doing to manage the symptoms, and whether or not it has helped.
- **What will this do?** By keeping track of this information, you will begin to notice trends or patterns in your condition.

Report on your symptoms, changes and patterns in between visits. Also report on any medications, supplements, or other treatments you are using (acupuncture, massage, meditation, change in diet, change in exercise etc) that you are using as well as their effects.

List your main concerns or questions. **Ask these at the beginning of your visit.** If you have more than 2 or 3 questions, give the whole list to your provider, but do not expect answers to more than 2 or 3 during the visit. Your provider should see the whole list, because something may not seem important to you may be important medically.

Ask questions about your diagnosis, tests, treatments and follow-up.

Repeat back to your provider key points discussed during the visit **BEFORE** you leave the appointment.

- **Example:** This might mean repeating your diagnosis, prognosis, next steps, and/or treatment actions. Your provider will likely give you paperwork about when your next appointment should be made when you leave. Confirm this verbally along with any other instructions you might be given by your provider such as; contact the provider if your symptoms worsen, or if new symptoms occur that have been discussed.
- **What will this do?** This gives both you and your provider an opportunity to correct any miscommunications before you leave your appointment. This will also allow you to be more successful (and more importantly...feel better) after you leave your appointment.

Take action If there are barriers to your following the recommendations of your provider, let this person know before you leave the appointment.

- **Example:** Your doctor recommends that you engage in regular exercise, though you are in a lot of pain and are having challenges moving. This is a good time to discuss your physical challenges or limitations. It may also be beneficial to get a referral from your doctor to an occupational or physical therapist, or other practitioner who can help you find a comfortable way to get regular exercise that will work for you (rather than leaving and not doing anything).
- **What will this do?** Having this open conversation **BEFORE** you leave your appointment will set you up for greater success, and will empower you to take part in your health. Be honest with your provider. If you have any doubts about following through with the recommended plan, **SPEAK UP!**