

Questions to ask your doctor

It can be intimidating to get the information you need from your doctor. You might feel that they are too busy to listen to everything you have to say, or you may not understand some of the things they tell you.

But your doctor is there to help you, and wants to make sure you remain healthy. Take your time. Take a deep breath. When you don't understand something the doctor is saying, ask them to explain it again.

It can help to bring a list of questions with you, so you don't forget anything you wanted to talk about. Below is a list of questions that you may want to ask your doctor. Bring it with you the next time you have an appointment.

It may also be helpful to bring a notebook and a pen so that you can write down the doctor's response to your questions.

1. What is my risk for heart disease and stroke?
2. What is my blood pressure, what does it mean for me, and what do I need to do about it?
3. What are my cholesterol numbers—total cholesterol, LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, HDL (“good”) cholesterol, and triglycerides—what do they mean for me, and what do I need to do about them?
4. What is my body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference measurement, and do they indicate that I need to lose weight for my health?
5. What is my blood sugar level, and am I at risk for diabetes?
6. What other screening or diagnostic tests for heart disease and stroke do I need? Do I need an electrocardiogram or stress test?
7. What can you do to help me quit smoking and manage my cravings?
8. How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?
9. What is a heart-healthy eating plan for me? Should I see a registered dietitian or a qualified nutritionist to learn more about a heart-healthy eating plan?
10. How can I tell if I am having a heart attack or stroke?
11. How often should I return for checkups?