

## Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety Safety Tips for Your Medical Appointments

Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety suggests the following safety tips for your next appointment. It is your responsibility to be prepared and organized for your next appointment. Also, use our free *Patient Safety Checklist for Medical Appointment*<sup>®</sup>.

- 1. Always ask questions about your health concerns and make sure you understand the problem and any remedy.**
  - Be sure to tell your doctor if you don't understand his or her answers.
  - If you don't feel comfortable to talk to your doctor, ask to talk to another person or nurse.
  - Consider taking a relative or a trusted friend to your appointment.
  - If you don't speak English, ask to speak to an interpreter.
  - Sometimes, it is helpful to get information in writing.
  - Ask your doctor and nurse what is the best place to get more information about your problem and your choices for treatment.
- 2. Always make sure you understand how to take your medicine.**
  - You should list all your current medications, including dosage and time, or bring all your medications with you to your appointment.
  - Ask your doctor or nurse about the medicine, why you are taking it, when you should take it, how often during the day, and should you take with or without meal.
  - Ask your doctor if the medicine will have side effects with your usual or favorite foods, drink, and other medications.
  - Ask your doctor what you should do if you have a bad reaction to the medicine.
  - Make sure you understand the instructions on the label and all warnings with the medicine.
  - You also can talk to your pharmacist about your medicine.
- 3. Ask about results of tests during your appointment.**
  - Ask your doctor what kinds of tests you will have and when you will get the results.
  - Ask your doctor if there is anything you should be concerned about.
  - Make sure you understand what is "normal" for your age, gender, and condition.
  - It might be helpful to have a relative or a trusted friend present when you get the results.
  - Keep a record of your tests and results for your next visit.
- 4. Use the *Patient Safety Checklist*<sup>®</sup> and *My Medical Journal*<sup>®</sup> to make sure you have accurate medical information.**
  - Record all medications, dosage, and time.
  - Record all existing medical conditions and family medical history.
  - Record any unusual experience or reaction or side effects to any foods and medicine, such as anesthesia, antibiotics, and pain medicine.
  - Make sure you bring all necessary items and documents to your appointment (identification with picture, hospital card, insurance card, Medicare card, lab results, etc.)

Other *Patient Safety Checklists*<sup>®</sup> and the *My Medical Journal*<sup>®</sup> are available at  
[www.communityofcompetence.com](http://www.communityofcompetence.com)