

PHYSICIAN APPOINTMENTS

HOW TO PREPARE, ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AND GET THE MEDICAL INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED

After a brain injury, getting the medical care you need is more important than ever. Meeting with physicians can be stressful, but with a little preparation and practice you'll be a medical appointment pro in no time. Here are some tips to prepare for a medical appointment:

- After an injury, you may have been started on medications; the need for these medications can change over time. **Bring a copy of your current medication list to every medical appointment** so that your doctor always has the most up-to-date information.
- As you are getting ready for a doctor appointment, **write down questions and concerns that you want to address with the doctor.**
- When we are worried, it can be tempting to look on the internet for answers to medical questions. **Keep in mind**, the internet has a lot of information that may not apply to you.
- If you have something that you want to address with the doctor, the more information you have about your symptoms the better. Some common concerns are.
 - Pain
 - Sleep
 - Headache
 - Mood (anxiety or depression)
 - Fatigue
- When you bring these concerns up with your doctor, they will want to know about any patterns you have noticed (i.e. how sleep changes over time, what makes pain better or worse).
- **Tracking** these patterns in the time leading up to your appointment can be helpful. You can track your patterns by using:
 - Paper and pencil tracking
 - An app that will do the work for you, examples:
 - *PainScale* for pain
 - *Sleep Better* for sleep
 - *Daylio* for mood

IN THE APPOINTMENT

During a medical appointment, communication is key.

Tips for communication during an appointment:

- Let the doctor know that you have questions at the beginning of the appointment so that they can help make sure they answer your questions.
- It can be hard to remember all the information you get during an appointment. Ask if it is okay to take notes or record some information on your phone or another device.
- If you want someone you trust to come with you to an appointment, ask your doctor if that would be okay.
- At the end of the appointment, ask if there is additional information that the doctor would recommend that you read.

INSURANCE

If there are questions about your insurance coverage, consider:

- Contacting the insurance company and ask for someone who can explain your benefits.
- Ask the doctor's office if they have someone who can help you get the information you need.

