

# health matters

## Questions to Ask

### Doctor visits

To make the most of your doctor visits, it's important to ask questions. This helps your doctor make sure you get the care you need.

Cut out this list of questions and take it to your next appointment. You might ask:

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?

#### If you need medicine:

- What is the medicine for?
- Can I take a generic version?
- How and when do I take it?
- Are there side effects?

#### If you need tests:

- What are the tests for?
- How are the tests done?
- What are the risks of having the tests?

#### To learn more about treatment:

- What are my treatment choices?
- How will treatment help?
- Are there side effects?

For more examples of questions for your doctor, visit the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Web site at [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov).

## Eat healthy for less money

**H**ealthy meals do not have to cost a lot.

All it takes is a little planning. Here's how to stock your kitchen while keeping costs down:

**Go for grains.** Plan your meals around grains, such as oatmeal and brown rice, and whole-grain cereal, bread and pasta. These foods are good for you and tend to cost less than other foods.

**Buy seasonal produce.** Fruits and vegetables taste best and usually cost less when you buy them in season. Look for fresh tomatoes, peaches and melons in the summer. Enjoy apples, oranges and squash in the fall and winter.

Canned and frozen fruits and veggies are good choices too.

**Buy beans instead of meat.** Beans cost less and provide



protein and many other nutrients. They are also lower in fat than meat.

**Shop in the bulk foods section.** Bulk foods often cost less than packaged foods. And you can buy just the amount you need.

**Use nonfat dry milk.** It's the least expensive way to buy milk. Mix it several hours ahead and refrigerate so it can get cold before drinking.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture



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## Moving forward

If you just found out that you have diabetes, you might feel a bit overwhelmed. Diabetes means that the sugar levels in your blood are too high.

Try not to worry too much. You'll get the hang of it. Your health care team can help you learn about diabetes and how you can manage it. Make sure to ask any questions you have.

First, you'll need to know how to control your diabetes so you'll feel better and have a lower risk for serious health problems. You and your doctor are partners in managing your diabetes. Managing your diabetes includes:

- Keeping blood sugar levels within a normal range
- Maintaining or lowering overall

body weight

- Managing or lowering cholesterol levels
- Controlling blood pressure
- Reducing long-term diabetes complications, such as heart and kidney disease, and eye, nerve and foot problems

### Take control

To manage diabetes:

**Eat well.** All food affects your blood sugar, but eating some types of food can make more of a difference than others. Your doctor



or a dietitian can help you plan healthy meals.

**Stay active.** Walking and other exercise can help you control diabetes and stay healthy in other ways.

**Track your blood sugar.** Your doctor can tell you about when and how to check your blood sugar.

**Get your eyes checked.** Each year you should have an eye exam. An eye doctor can determine if you have an eye problem or disease related to diabetes.

**Take your medicines.** If your doctor says you need diabetes pills, take them as prescribed.

Other tips:

- If you smoke, quit.
- Keep blood pressure and cholesterol levels under control.
- Ask when you need checkups.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

### Watch for signs of diabetes

Could you have diabetes and not know it?

Definitely. In fact, millions of people do.

Some people don't notice any symptoms, or their symptoms don't seem all that bad. However, you should take any warning signs seriously.

Diabetes can cause very serious health problems. So if you have diabetes, it's best to find out sooner rather than later. Then you can start taking steps to help

protect your health.

Be alert for these signs:

- » Increased thirst or hunger
- » Feeling very tired
- » Urinating often
- » Losing weight without trying
- » Blurry vision
- » Sores that heal slowly
- » A lot of infections
- » Very dry, itchy skin
- » Tingling or loss of feeling in your feet

If you have any of the signs, tell your doctor right away. He or she can test your blood to check for diabetes.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Medicines  
**Know what you're taking**

**M**any of the medicines you take contain acetaminophen (APAP). It is even in some common over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, such as Tylenol, Thera-Flu, Coricidin and Alka Seltzer Plus Cold. Too much APAP can harm your liver.

To keep from harming your liver,

watch how much APAP you take.

- Don't take more than 1g (1,000mg) at once.
- Don't take more than 4g (4,000mg) in 24 hours.
- Always check to see if OTC or prescription medicines contain APAP.

It can be hard to tell how much

APAP is in your medicines. Your doctor can help you figure out how much you're taking.

Make sure you tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines that you are taking, including OTC drugs.

It may help to make two lists: one of the drugs that you were asked to take by the doctor and one of the drugs that you buy from the store, like Tylenol. Give both lists to your doctor or pharmacist.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to write down the amount of APAP in all of your medicines.

Add up the amount that you take in 24 hours. This amount should not be more than 4,000mg\*. If you are getting close to 4,000mg, talk to your doctor right away.

It is important for you to know how much APAP your child is taking too. Make sure you talk to your child's doctor about APAP.

\* For adults only. This amount is not recommended for children and could cause serious harm.

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**List your medicines**

Writing down all the medicines you take may be easier than trying to remember them when you go to the doctor or pharmacy.

Use this chart as an example or fill it out and bring it to your next doctor visit. Your doctor or pharmacist can fill in the amount of acetaminophen (APAP) in each of your medicines and give it back to you.



Medicine that your doctor ordered (prescription)	Amount of APAP (mg)	Medicine that you buy at the store (OTC)	Amount of APAP (mg)
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>Subtotal:</b>	
<b>Total number of APAP at one time:</b>			
<b>Total number of APAP in 24 hours:</b>			

## Speak up!

### Talking with your child's doctor

Your child's doctor is the person you will turn to for advice on sore throats, bumps and bruises, and maybe even broken bones.

But to get good advice, you need to do your part.

Be sure to:

**Make a list.** Before visits, write down any questions you have about your child's health. That way you won't forget something important.

**Just ask.** If you have any

questions, be sure to ask the doctor. Don't hold back because you think you should know the answers. Your questions show how much you care about your child's health.

**Make the most of your phone.** Call the doctor any time your child seems very sick. Call during office hours with questions about something that isn't too serious, such as a cold or behavior problems.

And always trust your feelings. Whenever you believe there is a problem, talk to your child's doctor.

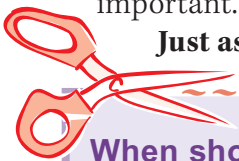
Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Medical Association



#### » action

take

**For more information, call the National Institutes of Health at (800) 370-2943.**



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#### When should your child get vaccines?

Vaccines protect children from diseases such as measles and polio. You can help protect your children by making sure they get all their vaccines on time.

This chart shows which vaccines children should get and at what age they should get them.

If your child doesn't get a vaccine at the set time, most can be given later. But talk to your child's doctor first. The chart also shows the best time to get catch-up vaccinations.

#### Vaccines children need

- HepB** = hepatitis B
- Rota** = rotavirus
- DTaP** = diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis
- Tdap** = tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis booster
- Hib** = *Haemophilus influenzae* type b
- HPV** = human papillomavirus
- IPV** = inactivated poliovirus
- MMR** = measles, mumps, rubella
- Var** = varicella (chickenpox)
- PCV/PPSV** = pneumococcal
- HepA** = hepatitis A
- Flu** = influenza
- MCV** = meningococcal

Range of recommended ages

Catch-up shots

\* 1st dose at birth

\*\* In some cases

1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	19-23 months	2-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	11-12 years	13-18 years	
HepB*		HepB**		HepB						HepB series			
	Rota (2 or 3 doses)												
	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP**	DTaP				DTaP		Tdap	Tdap	
	Hib	Hib	Hib**	Hib							HPV series		
	IPV	IPV		IPV					IPV		MCV	MCV	
				MMR					MMR	IPV			
				Var					Var	MMR/Var			
				Flu (yearly)									
	PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV						PPSV			
				HepA (2 doses)						HepA series			
										MCV			

Vaccines below this line are for certain children. Ask your doctor.

Compiled with information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention