

HEALTH CARE QUALITY

Health care quality means receiving the right care, at the right time, in the right way, at the right price, for the right person, by the right provider, and having the best possible results. Every day, millions of Americans receive high-quality health care.

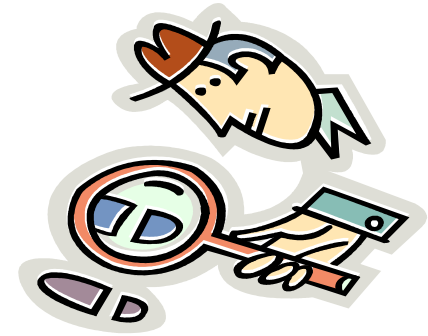


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Discovering the Health Detective in You!



Consumer Guide to Better Health

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When faced with a life-threatening disease, learning about your treatment options can help you make informed choices about your health care. The treatment your doctor recommends will depend on your diagnosis, your disease status and other health factors specific to you.

The first step in learning about your treatment options is to ask your doctor questions. You may also want to talk to other doctors (get a second opinion). Different doctors may recommend different treatments. You can gather information from books, articles, the internet and other people. Then you can discuss this information with your doctor.

Your health care provider should always:

*Inform you of **all your options** for health care services*

*Offer you **a choice of other ancillary service providers***

*Promote **patient freedom of choice***

*Support **your choice***

Honor your choices

As a patient you should always be:

*Given choices on **where you receive care***

*Aware of **alternate treatment options***

*Part of the **decision making process***

*Receiving **care where you feel most comfortable***

Your Health = Your Responsibility Follow the Clues for Improved Health

On average, people see their doctor approximately 3 times a year for about 19 minutes at each appointment. That is slightly less than one hour out of the year. What should you do the rest of the year to take charge of your health?

Clue # 1

Discover new lifestyle choices.

What you eat and how you live affect your health. Make time to exercise, get enough sleep and eat nutritious foods. If you use tobacco, create a plan to stop.

Clue # 2

Become an informed health care consumer.

Study up on your health care options and choose a health care provider that matches your needs. Check out the website listed in this guide for reliable health information.

Clue # 3

Play an active role in your health care.

Ask questions about your medication, treatment plans and daily self care. Keep track of your medical history and medications.

For up-to-date information on clues for improved health visit: www.mayoclinic.com

Help Your Doctor – Be a Health Detective

Doctors are health detectives too so give them as many clues as possible by gathering all your medical information. Provide your doctor with a list of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, herbs and vitamins you are taking, as well as your medical history, immunizations and a list of allergies. Why is this important? Consider this, if your doctor knows how much medication you are currently taking, he or she can use that information to make a speedier diagnosis.

Quality Counts

All health care is not the same. Differences in quality and safety can affect your health or the health of someone you care about. High quality health care does not necessarily cost more.

A health care quality measurement is relatively new and still an imperfect science, but hospital quality can be measured. Learning about quality can be helpful to you in comparing services and seeking care.

It has been proven that public information drives improvement. Publicly reporting quality results provides a powerful incentive for hospitals to improve.

Consumers deserve information. You have more information to use to compare cars or computers than you do to choose a hospital, physician or treatment option.

Take Charge of Your Health Care

The single most important thing you can do to ensure you get high-quality health care is to find and use health information, and take an active role in making decisions about your care.

Here are some steps you can take to improve your care:

Work together with your doctor and other members of the health care team to make decisions about your care

Ask questions

Ask your doctor what the scientific evidence has to say about your condition

Do your homework; go online or to the library to find out more information about your condition

Find and use quality information in making health care choices. Be sure the information comes from a reliable source.