

Checklists to Make the Most of Health Care Encounters

The logo for the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) features the letters 'N', 'F', 'C', and 'A' in white, each inside a black square. The squares are arranged horizontally and are connected by a thin, light-colored line that loops around the top and bottom of the squares.

Doctor's Office Visit Checklist

Before the Visit

- Gather your questions
- Identify current symptoms
- Check the patient file
- Call to confirm appointment

During the Visit

- Help with reporting
- Describe symptoms accurately
- Ask questions
- Record doctor's instructions
- Discuss recommendations
- Verify follow-up

After the Visit

- Review your notes
- Check prescriptions
- Discuss the visit
- Update your calendar
- Call for test results

Emergency Room Checklist

Being Prepared

- Post emergency information in a prominent place
- Have updated patient information ready to go
- Enlist a friend to be your "ER buddy" before a crisis occurs
- Pack a bag ahead of time

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At the Emergency Room

- Relay critical information to the ER staff
- Introduce yourself to the head nurse and attending physician
- Get out of the way
- Wait patiently
- Review patients' rights information while waiting
- Ask for regular updates
- Gauge your loved one's reactions
- Listen and ask questions
- Recognize staff limitations
- Stay calm and take care of yourself



Medications

- Is the patient taking his medications on time? At the prescribed dose? If not, what seems to be going wrong?
- Is he complaining about or suffering from any side effects? If so, what are they (drowsiness, hyperactivity, etc.)?
- Does anything seem to have suddenly changed in his response to medication? If so, what is it?
- Did he stop taking a medication for any reason? If so, why and what happened as a result?

Emotional and Mental Well-being

- Does the patient seem to be as mentally sharp and alert, or has there been a noticeable decrease in mental function? What are the symptoms?

- How is his memory, both long-term and short-term? Has it changed recently? If so, in what way?
- Can he still do and enjoy activities as in the past? Has something suddenly become boring or unpleasant?
- Does he feel responsible for being ill and/or angry about his condition?
- Does he fear the truth and put off doctor visits based on what he thinks the doctor may say about his problem?
- Is he able to laugh and enjoy life?
- Does he seem to be more emotionally overwrought than usual? In what way?
Anxious Depressed Fearful Sad
Hyped-up Excitable Other _____