



## Tips for Talking With Your Doctor

# Making Good Use of Your Time During a Doctor's Visit

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- ✓ **Be honest** — It is tempting to say what you think the doctor wants to hear, like you have stopped smoking or are eating a more balanced diet. This is natural, but it's not in your best interest. Your doctor needs all the facts to suggest the best treatment for you. For instance, you might say: *"I have been trying to eat fewer sweets, as you recommended, but I am not making much headway."*
- ✓ **Decide what questions are most important** — Pick three or four questions or concerns that you most want to talk about with the doctor. You can tell him or her what they are at the beginning of the appointment, and then discuss each in turn. If you have time, you can then go on to other questions.
- ✓ **Stick to the point** — Although your doctor might like to talk with you at length, there is only a limited amount of time for each patient. To make the best use of your time, give the doctor a brief description of the symptom, when it started, how often it happens, and if it is getting worse or better.
- ✓ **Share your point of view about the visit** — Tell the doctor if you feel rushed, worried, or uncomfortable. If necessary, you can offer to return for a second visit to discuss your concerns more fully. Try to voice your feelings in a positive way. For example, you could say something like: *"I know you have many patients to see, but I'm really worried about this. I'd feel much better if we could talk about it a little more."*
- ✓ **Remember the doctor may not be able to answer all your questions** — Even the best doctor may not have answers to some of your questions. Your doctor may be able to help you find the information or refer you to a specialist. If a doctor regularly brushes off your questions or symptoms as simply a part of aging, think about looking for another doctor.