

How to Talk With Your Health Care Professional About Chronic Pain

Know that it is your right as a patient to have your report of pain taken seriously and to be treated with respect. Be as organized and specific as possible. Write out your concerns and hand it to your provider when he/she walks in the door, keep a copy for yourself and go over it together.

Include (or print this out and fill in the information on this form):

- Where it hurts: _____
- Does the pain move or change? _____
- How does it feel? (i.e. numb, stabbing, etc.) _____
- Rate it on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most pain you have ever felt: _____
- What makes it better or worse? _____

- How is the pain affecting your daily life? _____

- Are you feeling depressed, anxious or irritable? _____
- What medications are you taking, including over the counter and herbal?

- Write out questions and concerns you would like answered.

It will also help your ongoing care and progress if you:

- Keep a file of all your notes in a folder that you carry with you, along with a list of all current medications and treatments. Give the same information to all health care providers, including specialists and any complimentary providers you are seeing.
- Take notes during the appointment. Ask questions. Bring someone you trust with you to help, if it's too hard to concentrate or you are too stressed.
- Research information yourself. Contact the organization for your diagnoses for information. Talk to others with the same or similar conditions. Be informed. It's your right to refuse treatment.
- Give medications or treatments appropriate time to work, but if you are not satisfied with the degree of pain relief you are having, tell your provider. If he/she is not willing to try other options see another provider. Get referrals the same way you researched the diagnoses. Be your own advocate.