



HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR FAMILY AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A Discussion Guide to Empower and Protect American Families' Health and Safety

Parents and caregivers should always feel heard and in control of their loved ones' care.

But determining the right approach in the face of so much health information and decision making can be a challenge.

This discussion guide is designed to empower in-depth conversations with your healthcare provider and equip you with the knowledge you need for confidence in care.

93% of clinicians prefer shared decision-making with their patients

This approach has been shown to improve satisfaction and health outcomes.

Before Your Visit

Consider these tips to prepare for your appointment:



Use a journal to record your specific questions and concerns over time.



Bring a list of current and past medications, noting side effects and effectiveness.

Asking the Right Questions

1

Understand the Problem:

- How do we treat the root cause rather than just manage symptoms?
- Are there any early signs of chronic issues that we should address now with lifestyle changes?
- Is this something that may improve over time without medical intervention?

2

Cross-check Treatment Plans:

- Why do you recommend this treatment now? Is it necessary?
- Do you know where and how this treatment was developed/researched?
- How will we evaluate the effectiveness and continuation of this treatment plan?

3

Assess the Alternatives:

- How sure are you about this diagnosis? Are there other possibilities?
- Are there alternative treatments to consider, potentially non-medication?
- Who would you recommend for a second opinion if we want one?

After Your Visit

Ensure you leave the appointment with a plan, alternatives, and your concerns voiced.



Track and record how the plan for your family's health is progressing.



Follow up with your doctor on treatment and questions you think of after leaving.

Additional Resources

[OASH: Make the Most of Your Child's Visit to the Doctor](#)

[Johns Hopkins: 4 Tips for Talking to Your Doctor](#)

[UW Medicine: 5 Scripts to Use When You Disagree With Your Doctor](#)

Self-advocacy starts with the tools to ask questions, say no, and explore solutions that work for your family.



Find more resources to help you get the care you need, supported by science you can trust.

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