

Making Good Health Choices

INFORMED HEALTH CARE CONSUMER

Every day we are faced with decisions that affect our health. Some of them, such as diet and exercise choices, are so small we may not even be aware of them or recognize their significance. Others, such as medical tests and procedures, including surgeries, may be more complicated and are clearly significant.

How can you become an informed health care consumer? Having a partnership with your health care provider puts you in the best position for managing your health. If you have a chronic illness, you may already be working with a Primary Care Physician (PCP) or specialist. If you don't have a chronic illness, now is the time to develop a working relationship with your PCP. Either way, you should feel your health care provider is someone with whom you can speak openly about your health concerns.

CHRONIC CONDITION MANAGEMENT

Living with a chronic illness can be challenging. Proper treatment can reduce symptoms and slow the progression of most illnesses. Here are some key things you can do to maintain your health, even if you have a chronic illness.

- 1) Have a prescribed treatment plan including medications, diet, and exercise.
- 2) Know the warning signs of a flare up or worsening and know how to respond.
- 3) Discuss with your doctor the signs and symptoms of depression, which can be common in people with chronic conditions.

If feelings of sadness, worry, or concern interfere with your daily living, please talk with your health care provider about treatment as soon as possible.

Advances in health care have led to improvements in quality of life for people with chronic conditions. In addition to managing your chronic condition, it is also important to be aware of recommended preventive health screenings. If you have not already discussed with your health care provider what age-appropriate health care services you should be receiving, such as routine screenings for cancers, cholesterol, high blood pressure, and immunizations, discuss these with him/her now.

DECISION SUPPORT

Often, before we can make a health care decision, we must first understand the diagnosis and treatment choices. The best way to make these health decisions is to gather the most reliable medical information, learn the pros and cons of each option, and determine what fits with your personal values. There are many sources of health information and it is important to determine if you are using a current and reliable source.

CONNECTIONSSM

One source of reliable information and support is ConnectionsSM Health Management Programs, which are designed to help you take an active role in your health care. Access to a Health Coach 24/7 or to the program's online encyclopedia of health information can help you start living a healthier life today.

To learn more, call your personal Health Coach at 1-800-275-2583 or visit online at www.ibxpress.com.

