



Healthcare for Seniors

Discuss health problems with me. You may not want to bring up intimate issues such as sexual or urinary difficulties; also, problems that you think are trivial – such as stomach upsets, constipation, or jaw pain – may require further evaluation. Don't hold back; there are many things I can help you with.

Please understand what I've told you about a health problem or treatment plan. "I couldn't understand the doctor," or "He told me what to do, but I can't remember what he said," are typical complaints. Reluctance to ask me to repeat information can result in serious health consequences.

Please be careful about falling. Falls result in fractures and painful injuries that may take months to heal. To help guard against falling:

- Remove scatter rugs from your home.
- Make sure that your home and work areas are well lit.
- Wear sturdy, well-fitting shoes.
- Watch for slopes and cracks in sidewalks.
- Exercise to improve muscle tone and strength.

Have a system for managing medicines. By using daily schedules, pillbox reminders, or check-off records, you can avoid the consequences of missed medication doses. Because I and your other healthcare providers need to know all of the medicines you are taking, be sure to maintain a complete list of your prescription and over-the-counter medicines, including dose and the reason that the medicine is being taken.

Have a single primary care physician. You may be over or undertreated if a single physician is not monitoring your health and evaluating treatment regimens.

Seek medical attention promptly. Reasons for such inaction may include denial, lack of money, or a sense of inevitability: "I'm so old it doesn't matter anymore." Such treatment delays can result in a more severe illness and poorer prognosis.

Please participate in all prevention programs. Flu and pneumonia shots, as well as routine breast and prostate exams, are examples of readily available preventive health measures that

you should utilize to remain healthy.

Ask loved ones for help. Many seniors simply refuse to ask for help, often due to an understandable need for independence. It's important that you alert family members to any signs of ill health.

Don't drive when it's no longer safe. Knowing when it's time to stop driving is important for your own safety and the safety of everyone on the road. I'll be happy to help you make the decisions about when to give up your car keys; chronological age alone does not determine your fitness to drive

Don't fight the aging process and its appearance. Do you refuse to wear a hearing aid, eyeglasses, or dentures? Are you unwilling to ask for help or use walking aides? This behavior may make you accident-prone and prevent you from enjoying daily activities.