SP526-J-Be a Smart Health Care Consumer

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Keep medications out of the reach of children.
Never hesitate to call your doctor if you’re concerned about the medication you are taking.

**Anticipate Medical Emergencies**
- Know CPR and first aid.
- Keep your doctors’ phone numbers and emergency numbers near the phone at home and work.
- If you have an emergency, notify your doctor to ensure health insurance coverage.
- Know your health insurance coverage for out-of-state emergencies.
- Keep a first-aid kit at home and in the car.
- Only use the emergency room for immediate care.

**Hospital Hints**
- To save money and time, have tests done before you are admitted.
- Avoid being admitted on weekends.
- Know what services are covered by your health insurance.
- Carefully check your hospital bill.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS CONTACT:**
- Visit the UT Extension Web site at http://www.utextension.utk.edu/
- Visit the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/

A wellness publication written by
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Personal and Community Health
Only you are responsible for your health. Learn to use smart health care consumer skills. (√) Check those health actions you plan to try:

**Be a Partner with Your Health Care Provider**
- Provide a thorough medical history.
- Have medical records sent to your doctor before your visit.
- Keep a record of your symptoms.
- Bring medicines: prescribed, over-the-counter and vitamin/mineral supplements.
- Take notes during your visit to help you remember later.
- Have an annual physical.
- Choose a physician with whom you are comfortable.

**Make Lifestyle Choices**
- Stay physically active.
- Eat the MyPyramid.gov way.
- Manage your stress.
- Balance family, work and personal needs.
- Use safety practices at home, at work and while traveling.
- Protect skin from the sun. Use SPF of 15 or more.

**Take Charge**
- Know what your health insurance covers.
- Choose the services that fit your medical situation such as:
  - Office visit.
  - Non-emergency surgery.
  - Outpatient services.
  - Emergency room.
  - After-hours clinic.
- Know your medical coverage when traveling out-of-state or out of the country.

**Be Prepared When Meeting with Your Doctor about a Medical Procedure**
- Remember you are paying for the time with your doctor, so take time to ask questions until you understand and agree with the medical decision.
- Don’t be afraid to question your doctor’s recommendations. You have to live with the decision.
- Ask your doctor these questions:
  - What is the name of the procedure and what will be done?
  - What is the reason for this procedure?
  - What benefit can I expect?
  - What are the odds that I will get the benefit?
  - Are there other choices?

**Don’t Forget Self-care Practices**
- Don’t hesitate to call your health provider with health questions or problems.
- Keep a record of family medical information.
- Buy a simple health reference book.
- Get regular health screenings.
- Check skin for skin cancer.

**Take Medication Safely**
- Know the side effects of your medicines, both prescribed and over-the-counter.
- Throw away unused, out-of-date medication.
- Consider generic drugs.
- Remember over-the-counter medications and nutrient supplements are drugs.