



PREPARING FOR A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT

By the AHA Membership Services Committee

To make the most of the visit with your physician or other health professional, you will want to organize your thoughts and develop an agenda.

- Be clear on the reason for the appointment.
- Arrange for transportation if necessary.
- Remember that AHA volunteers may drive you to health appointments and may sit in on your visit with your health professional if you request them to do so.
- Bring a list of all current prescriptions, over the counter medications and vitamins that you take.
- Report any problems you have had taking your medications (side effects, timing, etc.).
- List any symptoms or changes you have noticed since your last visit. Be as specific as possible, such as when the problem began.
- Think about what questions or concerns you have and want to discuss with the health professional. Write them down.
- Arrive on time.
- At the beginning of your appointment give the health professional a copy of the list of concerns and questions you have.

Before you leave the appointment, be sure that your questions and concerns have been addressed and that you have an accurate understanding of:

- What was discussed at the appointment
- Any diagnosis made at the appointment
- The treatment or plan, including medications (their dosage and possible side effects) and other treatment options (e.g. therapies) that may be available to you
- Any follow-up needed after the appointment, including the nature and contact information for the follow-up and who will make the appointment.

Ask your physician to give you a clearly written statement with those key elements in it, as well as a hard copy of any referral form or physician order.