



Your Clinic Visit

For immigrant women and others new to the U.S. medical system

Learning about health care and seeing a doctor in a new country can be difficult. Even if you can speak English well or have an interpreter it might be hard. You and your doctor may have different words or ideas about health and illness. The steps you need to take to see the doctor may be different than in your native country.

This handout gives tips may help you with your visit.

Before Your Visit

Ask them:

- What bus is near the office?
- At what bus stop do I get off the bus?
- When should I come?
- What should I bring?
- Where to park, if you are driving or someone will drive you to your visit.

Tell them:

- If you are bringing a friend or family member with you.
- You will need an interpreter and to please make the arrangements.

Get Ready for Your Visit

Make a list of your questions or concerns.

- Think about what you have already done to try to feel better. Make notes about this too, and take them with you to your visit.
- Plan to bring a friend or family member if they can help you explain.

At Your Visit

- Arrive early. If you come late your visit may be very short.
- Tell your story to your provider. Be honest and use the list you brought.
- Tell your provider all the medicines and herbs you use for your health.
- Tell your provider about any food supplements, special foods, tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs or substances that you use.

- If you have fears and worries, it will help your provider care for you if you can share them.
- Talking about private or sensitive topics can be hard, but if you have questions or concerns, your provider will try to help you.

About Your Provider

Western providers learn that it is important to understand more about the patient than just their physical symptoms or concerns. They will probably ask you about your physical concerns and symptoms, but they may also ask you about how you feel and your mood.

They may also ask you some questions about your family and possible help they may provide. They may even ask you about your finances. They do not do this to pry. They want to make suggestions for your care that makes sense medically. They also want the suggestions they make to be ones you could follow, and that are possible financially and culturally.

The more information you can share, the better prepared your provider will be.

When your provider makes suggestions, it is important that you feel these are explained so you can understand what they want you to do and why the suggestion is made. Sometimes providers think they have explained, but you may not understand. Go ahead and ask questions!

Get Instructions from Your Provider

Make certain that you ask questions and talk about your concerns, and that your provider explains how they will approach your concerns.

- Repeat instructions back to your provider to be certain you understand.
- If you can read or someone in your home reads English, have your provider write down the instructions. It is hard to remember everything from a visit.

Questions?

Call 206-598-5500

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Women's Health Care Center:
206-598-5500

Know the Right Phone Number

When you schedule your visit or at registration, ask:

- During the day, what phone number do I call if I have a problem or a question?
- If the office is closed, what phone number do I call?

Phone Numbers

Daytime: _____

When the office is closed: _____

Provider: _____

Clinic hours: _____

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