



Partners in Care

You, your family, and your healthcare team

This handout explains how you and your family can work with your healthcare providers to get the best results from the care you receive.

You and your family are vital members of your healthcare team. Doctors, nurses, and other care providers are also on your team. We will all work together to improve your health or treat your condition.

We want you and your family to ask questions. We want to make sure you understand your treatment plan and how to take care of yourself at home.

After meeting with your team, you should be able to answer these 3 questions:

- What is my main health problem?
- What do I need to do about this health problem?
- Why is it important to do these things?

If the answer to any of these questions is not clear, be sure to ask your care team for more information.

Talk with Your Healthcare Providers

Talk with your providers about what to expect at each step of your care:

- **Share your complete health history** and tell your providers about other treatment you may be receiving anywhere else.
- **Ask your healthcare providers to speak openly** with you about your health. You are the most important decision-maker on your healthcare team. Getting clear and complete information will help you make decisions.
- **Learn more about your diagnosis.** Know the exact name of your condition, the medical tests and procedures you are having, and what risks and problems may be involved.
- **Gather information** on your condition or treatment from your healthcare providers.

If you or your loved one has cancer:

- **Ask questions.** Write down your questions and concerns before your visit and bring them with you to your clinic or hospital. (See page 4 for some questions you may want to ask.)
- **Write down the answers.** It can be hard to remember things we hear when we are under stress, or if we receive a lot of new information all at once. Bring a notebook to your visits so you can write the answers to your questions while they are fresh in your mind, either during the visit or soon after. Or bring someone with you who can write down the answers.



You and your family are vital members of your healthcare team.

- **Know and follow the treatment plan** that you and your healthcare providers agree on. Ask questions if you are not sure of the plan or why it is important to follow it.

What Your Loved Ones Can Do

Involve a family member or friend in your care. Be clear about what you want them to do. Ask for their help when you need them to:

- Go with you to your doctor visits.
- Take notes or ask questions that you may not think of.
- Help you gather health information.

With your permission, staff may share treatment information about you with your family and trusted friends. Be sure to tell your caregivers and clinic staff what family members or friends you would like them to share this information with.

Be Involved for Best Results

Patients who are actively involved in their healthcare tend to get better results. To become more involved:

- Ask family members and friends to help with your care.
- Know what medicines you take and why.
- Know your medical history and treatment plans.

Know About Your Medicines

Talk with your pharmacist and healthcare providers to understand the purpose, dosage, appearance, side effects, and drug interactions of each medicine that is prescribed for you. Your healthcare providers can also suggest ways for keeping track of how and when to take your medicines.

- Bring your medicines or an updated list of your medicines with you to every clinic or hospital visit.
- Keep a current list of all medicines you take. Include prescription and nonprescription (over the counter) medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- Also keep a list of:
 - Your allergies and reactions to food, medicine, or anything else, such as latex
 - Immunizations and vaccinations you have had
 - Names and phone numbers of your other doctor(s) and pharmacist(s)
- Bring your drug benefit card to hospital or clinic visits.
- Before you leave the hospital or clinic, be sure you know and understand these 5 things about your medicines:
 1. **Purpose** – What is the medicine supposed to do? You can also ask your doctor or pharmacist about any new medicines and if there are any other drugs that would work for your needs.

2. **Dosage** – Exactly how should you take your medicine? Find out when to take it, how to take it (with water, with food, without food, etc.), and what to do if you miss a dose.
3. **Appearance** – What do your medicines look like? Tell your doctor or pharmacist if the medicine you receive looks different from the one you usually take.
4. **Side Effects** – What side effects could you have while taking the medicine? Find out what to do if they occur.
5. **Drug Interactions** – Are there any other drugs you should avoid while taking this medicine? Help all your healthcare providers, including your dentist, screen for possible drug interactions. Give them a complete list of your medical conditions and all the medicines you take.

Help Prevent the Spread of Infection

These simple steps can help prevent you from getting an illness or infection while you are in the hospital or clinic:

- Ask all providers and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or to use hand gel. Hand washing is the best way to fight the spread of infection.
- Ask anyone who might visit you, either in the hospital or at home, to wait to visit you until they are well. A visitor who has an infection, even “just” a cold, could affect your recovery or treatment.
- Ask your nurse what infection-control precautions you need to tell your family members and friends about.

About Your Medical Records

Your medical records have important information about your health history.

- If this is your first visit to our hospital or clinic, please ask your other healthcare providers to send your medical records to us. Or you can bring your own copies with you.
- If you have other healthcare providers:
 - We will ask you to sign a “release of information” form that allows us to share information about your treatment here with your other providers.
 - Bring the name(s) and address(es) of your other providers so that we can send them this information.

Report Your Concerns

- If you have concerns about your medical care or wish to report a safety concern, contact the manager of the department where you received care.
- If you are not satisfied with the response or results you receive from that manager, please call Patient Relations:
 - For UWMC - Montlake, call 206.598.8382
- You or your family may request a care conference with your healthcare team if you feel your concerns are not being addressed.

Questions You May Want to Ask

Diagnosis

- What is the exact name of my diagnosis, disease, or condition? If this condition has other names, what are they?
- What can I expect to happen as a result of having this condition? How will it affect my work and everyday activities?
- Will I need to see a specialist? If yes, who would you suggest? Will I need a referral to see this specialist?

Choices for Treatment or Procedures

- What choices for treatment do I have?
- What are the risks or problems that might occur with these treatments or procedures?

Suggested Treatment or Procedure

- What treatment or procedure do you suggest for me? Why?
- What are the risks or problems that might occur with this treatment or procedure?
- How long does this treatment or procedure take?
- Will I need a family member or friend to be a caregiver (someone who can help with care) at the hospital or at home?
- Will I need someone to drive me to and from the hospital when I have this treatment or procedure?
- Should I limit or avoid any activities after this treatment or procedure?
- What can I do to manage any pain or other symptoms after this treatment or procedure?

Helpful Phone Numbers

University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) - Montlake

Health Information Management (medical records)	206.744.9000
Patient Relations.....	206.598.8382
Pharmacy.....	206.598.4363
UWMC Main Operator (24 hours a day).....	206.598.3300
UWMC Paging Operator (24 hours a day)	206.598.6190

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.