

Tips for talking with your health care provider about your **mental health**

Don't wait for a health care provider to ask about your mental health. Start the conversation. Here are five tips to help prepare and guide you on talking to a health care provider about your mental health and getting the most out of your visit.



1

Talk to your primary care provider.

If you don't know where to start for help, you may want to consider bringing up your mental health concerns during your appointment with a primary care provider (PCP). A PCP is a health care practitioner people see for common medical problems, and this person is often a doctor. However, a PCP may be a physician assistant or a nurse practitioner.

2

Prepare ahead of your visit.

Health care providers have a limited time for each appointment, so it may be helpful to think of your questions or concerns beforehand.

- Prepare your questions
- Prepare a list of your medications
- Review your family history

3

Consider bringing a friend or relative.

It can be difficult to absorb all the information your health care provider shares, especially if you are not feeling well. A companion can be there for support, help you take notes, and remember what you and the provider discussed.

4

Be honest.

Your health care provider can help you get better only if you have open and honest communication. It is important to remember that discussions between you and a health care provider are private and cannot be shared with anyone without your expressed permission. Describe all your symptoms to your provider and be specific about when they started, how severe they are, and how often they occur. You should also share any major stressors or recent life changes that could be triggering or exacerbating your symptoms.

5

Ask questions.

If you have questions or concerns, ask the health care provider for more information about the mental health diagnosis or treatment. If a provider suggests a treatment option that you're not comfortable or familiar with, express your concerns and ask if there are other options.



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