

Be an active part of your healthcare team

Bayanihan Para Sa Ating Kalusugan*

Have you or your family members ever felt confused or overwhelmed after a healthcare appointment? Or, have you ever felt that you did not get the information you needed? Here are some tips that can help you.

You are the most important part of your healthcare team

You and your family members are the best advocates for your healthcare. Take an active role in your healthcare by partnering with your healthcare team.

Your healthcare team includes you, your family members, caregivers, and healthcare providers that work together to plan and coordinate your care.

By taking an active role, you can help ensure you are supported and more in control of your healthcare.

Make the most of your visit with your healthcare team

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you visit your healthcare team, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and more.

**Translated from Tagalog to English: Let's work together as a community for our health.*

The Tagalog version of this tip sheet is available at ABFilipinoHealth.com.

“We encourage patients to ask their questions and let us know if they don’t understand something.”

– Dr. Karla Florencio, Calgary, HQA physician advisor



Before your visit:

- Write down your questions, symptoms, and concerns and bring this with you to your appointment. This may include questions about your lab results or medications. If your list is long, you may need to prioritize what you want to discuss or book another appointment.

Tip: Call your clinic in advance and let them know if you may need some extra time or additional appointments.

- List all your medications and dosage – if you are not sure, you can ask your pharmacist for a list or ask for a copy of your medications during your healthcare appointment.
- **Ask a family member or friend to go with you** (be sure to ask your clinic about current public health restrictions).



During your visit:

- Use your list of questions, symptoms, and concerns to tell your healthcare team what you want to discuss and what you want to get from the appointment. Explain what concerns you most.
- Be confident about asking your questions – you can ask for more information or resources about your concerns, medications, and/or treatment options.
- Make sure you understand the treatment options as well as the advantages and disadvantages.
- If you disagree with the proposed treatment plan or you are unsure, it is ok to say no or ask for more time to think about it.
- Write down the instructions you are given before you leave. You can also record your conversation with the permission of your healthcare team.
- Confirm who should be your main contact and when and how you can expect to hear from them or how can you contact them.

“Getting the most of what the healthcare system can offer is within your reach. Take part and be involved in your medical care.”

– Dr. Karla Florencio, Calgary, HQA physician advisor

Let your healthcare team know if you do not understand something

Be open and honest.

You could say, “This is new to me. Would you mind explaining it slowly, using language that is easier to understand?” or “Can you show me a picture or model to help me understand?”

Medical terms can be technical and hard to understand. Ask for explanations and examples to ensure you fully understand them.

After your visit:

- Book appointments at the lab or other offices as soon as possible and confirm when the results will be sent to your healthcare team. If you like, you can access your health records online and share them with people you trust: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords>
- Call back if you have any concerns, your symptoms get worse, you have problems with your medicine, or you want to understand anything else.
- Ask your healthcare provider about scheduling a yearly appointment (annual check-up).



Receive healthcare in your preferred language

Find a family doctor who speaks your language or a walk-in clinic where your language is spoken: Visit <https://albertafindadoctor.ca> or ask a family member or friend to assist you in using this website. You can also find a doctor who speaks your language or walk-in clinic where your language is spoken by calling Health Link at 8-1-1.

Health advice and information: To speak with a nurse for health advice or information in your preferred language, call Health Link 24/7 by dialing 8-1-1.

You can receive mental health support in your language. Translators are available through the Alberta Health Services Mental Health Help Line which provides 24-hour confidential information, support and referrals to Albertans experiencing mental health concerns.

Call 1-877-303-2642 (toll free).

Interpretation and language card: In Alberta Health Services facilities (hospitals and community health centres), you can advise your healthcare team that you require interpretation. You can also print a language card from the AHS website which says, in English, that you require translation in your preferred language. You can show this card to healthcare providers when needed. Alternatively, you can ask someone write this message on a card that you keep with you. Learn more at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/languages/languages.aspx>

Healthcare in rural communities

If you live in a rural community in Alberta, you can find healthcare services near you by using this website or asking someone to assist you: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth>. Or, you can call Health Link at 8-1-1.

Tips for managing your medications

- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what each medication does and how to use it. Pharmacy staff are on your team. Ask them any questions you have about your prescription or non-prescription medications including proper dosage and possible side effects.
- Ask which activities, foods, prescription/non-prescription medications, herbal remedies, vitamins, and/or diets to avoid with your medications.
- Your pharmacy may offer free delivery of medications and helpful packaging (such as blister packs, non-childproof lids and dosettes). Be sure to ask.
- Get help right away if you think you are experiencing side effects or adverse reactions to your medications.

Note: Call 9-1-1 if you are having difficulty breathing or have other life-threatening symptoms. Otherwise, you can contact Health Link at 8-1-1 for assistance in deciding where and when to get help with side effects or adverse reactions.

“It is very important to regularly see your family physician to assess and help manage your health.”

– Dr. Karla Florencio, Calgary, HQA physician advisor

Concerns about your healthcare?

If you have a concern about your healthcare experience, you can let your provider or the healthcare organization know. This can help improve care for you and for others. If you don't know who to talk to, contact the Alberta Health Advocate to discuss your options: <https://www.alberta.ca/office-of-alberta-health-advocates.aspx>

More tips for taking an active role in your healthcare

For more tips, including a symptom tracker and questions to ask about lifestyle changes, visit: www.ABFilipinoHealth.com

Watch the YouTube video in your language here: <https://www.youtube.com/HealthQualityCouncilAB>

About HQA

Health Quality Alberta (HQA) is a provincial agency that brings together patients, families, and our partners from across healthcare and academia to inspire improvement in patient safety, person-centred care*, and health service quality.

HQA values inclusivity and recognizes the unique information needs of communities in Alberta as well as the importance of providing resources to Albertans in their preferred language.

To understand and reflect the needs of the Filipino community in Alberta and accurately communicate the information, we engaged

**Person-centred care is healthcare that respects a person's beliefs, preferences, and values, and responds to the totality of their needs (including their families and caregivers).*

