

## Planning for your Healthcare Appointment

**TIP:** It's useful to keep an epilepsy management log with records of your epilepsy and treatment history. This includes medications, supplements, surgeries, diets, and other complementary therapies. You will hold a record of everything that's been done to understand and manage your epilepsy. It will help you talk to your healthcare provider and make it easier to discuss your treatment options.

### ■ Prepare

- Keep a seizure log.
  - Ask your community epilepsy agency for a seizure log.
  - Fill it out every time you have a seizure. The more details you include, the better.
  - Bring it to any epilepsy-related appointments – medical and community.
  - Bring it home with you for your records.
  - If you choose to share the seizure log with your health care team, give them a photocopy.
- Track your medications
  - List all of your prescriptions for epilepsy, including their
    - ◆ Names
    - ◆ Dosages
    - ◆ How often you take them
    - ◆ Side effects
    - ◆ Reasons for stopping a medication
  - Track all your over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies.
  - These lists give your healthcare team the information they need to advise you on possible drug interactions.
  - Keep the list with your seizure log.
  - You may find it useful to bring your original medication bottles to your healthcare appointments or take a cell phone picture of the labels on each bottle.
- Bring a pen and paper (notebook) to take notes during your appointment.
- Get ready to ask questions
  - Create a list of questions you have for your healthcare provider. These will be about your seizures, medications, side effects, etc.
  - Pharmacists can also answer your questions about medications, side effects, and drug interactions.
  - Create a list of questions for your community epilepsy agency. These can be about your Driver's License, school, work, mood, behaviour, discrimination, financial support, etc.

## Planning for your Healthcare Appointment *continued*

**TIP:** You can bring someone with you to your appointment to take notes, ask questions, and help you understand the information provided.

- Learn about epilepsy
  - Your community epilepsy agency will give you information about epilepsy, seizures, and other strategies to cope with your diagnosis.
  - Staff and volunteers at community epilepsy agencies do not diagnose or treat your seizures, but they can help you understand your rights in the healthcare system and in the community.
  - The more you know about epilepsy, the better you will be able to manage your seizures and maintain a healthy lifestyle. This information will also help you ask your healthcare provider specific questions about your epilepsy diagnosis and seizures.

**TIP:** If you have trouble with mood, coping, or feelings of hopelessness, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

**TIP:** If you don't understand what the doctor said, ask them to repeat it and write it down for you.

### SHARE INFORMATION WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

- Be HONEST when you describe how you feel.
- Explain other medical conditions, including physical and mental health.
- Tell your epilepsy care team if you are seeking help from other sources (naturopath, herbal remedies, biofeedback, chiropractic treatments, etc).
- Don't be too embarrassed to share personal details or sensitive subjects. Your healthcare team is there to help.

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- Make sure you understand
  - If there are new instructions to follow.
  - If there are any changes in your medications or other treatments.
  - If any follow up is needed. Was the healthcare provider going to book an EEG or MRI or refer you to a specialist?
- Write any new information about your seizures/epilepsy and changes to treatments in your epilepsy management log.
  - Include why changes were made.
  - Confirm with the healthcare provider that your understanding of the information they gave you is correct.
- Find out when to return for your next visit.
- Ask for medication renewals.

## Planning for your Healthcare Appointment *continued*

**TIP:** Find a consistent place to write down follow up appointments. This can be in your seizure log, a calendar on your fridge, or an electronic calendar on your cell phone or computer.

*Adapted from Making The Most of Your Doctor Visit (BC Epilepsy Society).*

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