

## **You and Your Child's Doctor**

When it comes to your child, you are the expert. It may be hard for you to talk with your child's doctor. It takes time to build trust and relationships. These tips may help:

### **Remember, you and the doctor are equal partners in your child's care.**

- Respect each others' knowledge. Share what you know about your child with the doctor. Also share thoughts or ideas about your child's needs.
- Respect each others' time. Write down your questions, ideas and concerns ahead of time. If needed, make a special appointment to talk about your child's care. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- When telling the doctor about a problem, be as specific as possible. Tell the doctor:
  - When and how often it happens (every day, only once, etc.).
  - What you see. For example, "If walking more than a few steps, my child has to work hard to breathe".
  - How it affects your child's life. For example, "My child has a hard time going to school and playing outside with friends".
- If necessary, find one doctor who can coordinate your child's special health care needs. This primary care doctor can also provide basic medical care for your child.



### **Think about what you need help with.**

- What is most important to talk about with the doctor?
- What are the most important questions you need answered?
- Be sure to write down questions that you might be shy about asking.

It will be helpful to keep records. Keep track of:

- Tests and results.
- Treatments and surgeries.
- Hospital stays.
- Medicines and immunizations.

Keep the records up-to-date. Take them with you to all appointments. You can download free forms at: <http://www.chw.org/teaching-sheets>. Select Forms from the **Filter by category** drop down menu.

Ask your child's provider if MyChart is available. Ask if someone can help you get a MyChart account set up.

## Helpful ideas

- List the most important questions first. There may not be time for all of them. If possible, mail or fax any new information and questions ahead of time. This may help the doctor be prepared.
- Make copies of any important pages from your records to share with the doctor.
- Ask if it is okay record the information being shared. It can be hard to remember all that's been said. It is also hard to take a lot of notes.
- Ask who can help you find resources, organizations, support groups, and websites. Ask if there is a Family Resource Center in your hospital. They may be able to help you find resources.
- If you don't understand what's being said, ask them to explain again. "You know, I asked you this last time, and you gave me an answer. When I got home, I realized that I really didn't understand."
- Keep in mind that there won't always be an answer.
- Ask the doctor to send copies of any tests and reports of the visit to you, and other providers you think may need the information. Write their addresses in the Care Notebook that you bring to the visit.

## Questions you might want to ask

You do not have to ask these exact questions. You can pick questions that will be helpful for you, or come up with your own.

### Diagnosis Questions

- What is it?
- How do you spell that?
- What does that mean?
- What will that mean for my child and family?
- Where can I find more details about the diagnosis?
- Are there any agencies that help families with a child who has this diagnosis?

### Treatment Questions

- What treatment do you recommend? Are there other options?
- Which options do you not recommend? Why?
- How soon must a decision be made?
- What might happen if I take a little more time to research and decide?
- What would happen if we chose to do nothing?

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**