

## Your doctor

A skilled physician values a good working relationship and serves as a guide to understanding diabetes, a supporter who triumphs your efforts to self-manage diabetes, and a safety net when your diabetes control bumps off track.

### To build a better relationship with your doctor:

- Prepare for each visit.
- Ask for your medical test results.
- Convey information in a brief, organized, clear and assertive way.
- Actively participate in decisions about your diabetes care, especially self-care.
- Take a risk. Be open and honest with your doctor.
- Be considerate of your physician's time and pressures.

Members of your healthcare team nurture you by respecting your opinion, being open to new ideas and information that you bring, focusing on you during appointments, knowing what's new about diabetes, and encouraging you to improve.

Does your doctor dismiss new information, insult you when you fail, threaten or scare you when your diabetes is off track? Dump the doc!

If you cannot connect with your doctor – when the poor state of your relationship has a negative impact on your diabetes – fire your doctor. Not all doctors are alike. Maybe it's time to look around for a physician who can address your needs.

Shopping around for a new doctor takes time, but it's an important investment in your future. Some people become so disheartened when they cannot communicate with their doctor that they stop seeking diabetes care for years.

### Arrest

Stop and think.

- Do you have low expectations of your doctor? When you don't get the care that you need, do you think, "That's just the way it is:"?

### Nurture

- Is your doctor flexible or insists on one-size-fits-all solutions? Your treatment plan needs to be individualized to maximize self-care.
- Consider firing your doctor if you are put on hold for more than 15 minutes or if your doctor does not return a phone call within 24 hours.

## At the visit

An average doctor's appointment lasts from 15 to 30 minutes. The following form letter can help you to communicate with your doctor by preparing you to ask questions and obtain answers in this short period of time.



## Your doctor *(continued)*

### At this visit

To help you to organize your thoughts and remember what you would like to ask your doctor at your next visit, complete any section of this form letter that applies to your current situation.

During our visit today, I would like to talk to you about the following issues.

- I have new information about my diabetes to share with you:

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- I have new information about my health to share with you:

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- I am facing these significant problems with my diabetes:

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- I am considering the following self-care strategies:

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- I need you to answer the following questions:

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Other concerns that I have...

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