

# Medical Self-Advocacy

## *What is medical self-advocacy?*

Self-advocacy is when you speak up or act in order to improve your situation. Your health care is a great example of when you should practice this skill. Your work with a medical provider is a partnership and you should expect it to be based on mutual respect and professionalism.

## *Why should I practice medical self-advocacy?*

Participating in your own health care will make you feel more in control, less tired/stressed, and give you a better chance of getting your needs met. Healthcare providers will see that you are interested in managing and preventing your own health problems.



## *How can I practice medical self-advocacy?*

- Go to a medical appointment with a list of questions.
- Don't try to diagnose yourself. Tell the medical provider all of your symptoms, even if they don't seem related.
- Listen carefully when the medical provider tells you what they think the problem is. Remember to ask questions and bring up any other thoughts you have.
- Make sure the doctor speaks in a language you understand. Ask more questions if you don't understand.
- Take prescribed medications as ordered and give the medicine a chance to work. Call the doctor if there is a problem or if the medicine isn't working so it can be changed or adjusted.
- If you are not satisfied with the care you receive, get a second opinion.

**For more information:** [www.cdc.gov/learnmorefeelbetter](http://www.cdc.gov/learnmorefeelbetter)



**Health**  **Whys**  
A public health message from  
[www.tjhd.org](http://www.tjhd.org)

Follow us on  
Facebook



**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH  
To protect the health and promote the  
well-being of all people in Virginia.