

Creating a Medical Health Summary

Things You Should Know about Your Medical History and Include in a Medical Health Summary

It is important to know about your medical history and conditions. This is especially important if you are planning to see a new doctor for the first time.

- A very useful tool is to create a *portable medical summary* that you can carry around and share with a new doctor or emergency room.
- This way a new health care provider can quickly learn about you and help you effectively.
- Please work with your health care team in knowing these things and preparing your medical health summary.

Basic Information About You

1. Name
2. Date of birth
3. Address
4. Guardianship
 - If you have a guardian or a power of attorney
5. Medical Home
 - Your primary care physician's name and office phone number

Your Conditions

1. Names of conditions
 - It is difficult to separate things that you “have” compared to things that you had once and went away. Work with your providers on knowing your current conditions.
2. Description of conditions
 - Try to describe your condition in three sentences.
 - How does your condition affect your body?
3. Secondary conditions or complications of your chronic condition.
 - These may be other things that you have because of your condition.
4. Key test results
 - Sometimes it is useful to know some of your lab numbers or other important test information.
 - Work with your providers on which ones you should know.

5. Limitations
 - Physical limitations?
 - Exercise limitations?
 - Fluid or dietary restriction?
 - Cognitive limitations?
6. Allergies
 - Do you know what happens when you are exposed to the allergen?

Your Doctors' Information

1. Doctors' names
2. Doctors' specialties
 - List the specialty next to the doctor's name (example, primary care doctor, cardiologist etc.).
3. Doctors' contact information
 - List all the contact numbers for your different doctors and the hospital/location where you see them

All this information is important so that other people know how to contact your doctors.

Your Medications

1. Names of medication
 - Current medications
 - Past medications you have taken and reason why you may have stopped them
 - Remember to mention any non-prescription medicines you are taking (including all alternative, homeopathic, and herbal medicines).
2. Dosing
 - Doctors think in milligrams, while most people know their medicines in terms of number of pills, tablespoons, teaspoons, milliliters (mLs or ccs).
 - The best way to know the dosages is to bring the bottle with the labels with you to an emergency room or to a new doctor.
3. Frequency
 - How often you take the medications.
 - Do you take the medication everyday or only when you need it?
4. Purpose of the medicine
 - Know why you take each medication.
 - For example, "I take this one for my blood pressure or for my pain".
5. Equipment/Medical supplies
 - List equipment or medical supplies that you use on a regular basis.
 - Examples: NG tubes, wheelchair, Tracheotomy.
 - Knowing the brand and size is helpful.
6. Medical devices
 - Include medical devices that you may have inside your body.
 - For example - Vagal Nerve Stimulator, Ventricular-Peritoneal shunt, Gastrostomy tube, Tracheostomy, Pace Maker

Your Medical History

There are probably many things in your medical history that are tricky to learn. It may be impossible to remember every detail of every part of your history

1. Surgeries
 - Best to try and know the name of the surgery, when you had it, and where you had it
2. Major hospitalizations
 - Make sure to include if you were ever in an intensive care unit.
3. Major infections
 - Have you had any for which you needed long hospitalizations or lots of treatment?
 - Major injuries

Your Family History

1. Family medical conditions
 - Are there any medical conditions that run in your family, generally extending to uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents?
 - Did these conditions begin when your family members were adults or when they were children -- for example, if your grandfather had heart disease at age 70 compared to a cousin who had heart disease at age 15.

Your Insurance

1. Name of insurance
2. Type of insurance
3. Contact information
 - Who you call if you have questions about what your insurance covers

Once you have all this information, it is great to put it in a summary form.

Some good websites that can help you make these summaries include:

- www.google.com/health
- <http://depts.washington.edu/healthtr/medsum/index.html>
- http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/for_families/care_notebook/

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