Communication is the most important part of your doctor visit. To make the most of your time, you need to share as many details as you can about your experience with epilepsy, and ask your doctor specific questions.

This can be a daunting task if you do not know where to begin, what to share, and what to ask.

The Epilepsy Foundation Western/Central Pennsylvania offers this guide to help you prepare for your visit, and walk away afterward feeling that you’ve been heard and have the advice you need.

Get in touch with us for more information about epilepsy and our free programs and services:

Pittsburgh Office (Headquarters)
1323 Forbes Ave., Suite 102
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
800-361-5885 ■ 412-261-5880
fax: 412-261-5361

Harrisburg Office
900 South Arlington Ave., Suite 126
Harrisburg, PA 17109
800-336-0301 ■ 717-541-0301
fax: 717-541-1202

Or, visit our comprehensive website at www.efwp.org.
The Epilepsy Foundation Western/Central Pennsylvania is dedicated to helping you face the challenges that epilepsy creates in your life.

One way is by providing this brochure to help guide you through your physician visit. It is important for you to prepare information in advance to share with your doctor and to think about what questions you need to ask your doctor while you are there.

Use this brochure to prepare for your next visit. Bring the tear-off card to the meeting to aid you in communicating with your doctor about your specific situation. It will help your doctor to more thoroughly address your needs.

Epilepsy Is A Unique Condition

As a person with epilepsy, you are in a unique circumstance. Since you may not be aware of what is happening during your seizures, you might not be able to remember things that could be vital to report to your doctor. And your doctor is not present to identify these symptoms or personally witness your seizures.

You will need to document what others witness during your seizures, and report the before and after effects. It is important to note as many specifics about your seizure activity as possible. Use the accompanying tear-off check list to record things you want to tell your doctor so that he or she has the information needed for a thorough evaluation.

Tell All?

Yes. You need to be forthcoming with your doctor to be properly diagnosed. Have you had any seizures? Have you taken your medications as prescribed? Are you having any problems with medication side effects? Are you experiencing any new or different seizure activity?

Stop and Ask?

Yes. If your doctor uses a word that you aren’t familiar with, ask what it means before moving on in the conversation. You need to understand what you are being told. And take notes.

Share Your Feelings

Don’t be afraid to say you are not feeling well, or that you’ve been having seizures. Share your feelings to help your doctor know your complete situation and how to help.

It is okay to say things like, I’m unhappy about my medication side effects – I’m embarrassed – I’m afraid to drive – I’m afraid I’ll hurt myself or someone else – I live in fear – I hate missing work – I’m concerned that I’m scaring my kids – I don’t sleep well – I’m feeling depressed – I think I need counseling.

What to Bring

• Someone who has witnessed your seizures and can comment on what they have seen
• Your notes on your seizure activity
• A list of all current medications (prescribed, over-the-counter, and herbal vitamin supplements) and how they are taken
• Information about any medical procedures performed prior to your first evaluation or since your last visit.

Some Questions to Ask Your Doctor

• Are there any foods, drinks, or activities to avoid?
• What time of day can I take my medications?
• Should I take medications with food?
• What if I forget a dose?
• How or when do I contact you if I have a seizure?
• If my seizures stop, can I stop my medication?
• If seizures continue, what other treatments exist?
• Can I drive?
• How can I better control my seizures?
• (For women) How will my medications affect oral contraception and/or pregnancy?
• When is my next appointment?
• What other medications can I take or should I avoid while taking my seizure medication?
• What if my child vomits shortly after taking his/her medicine? Should I repeat the dose?

Checklist of Symptoms to Tell Your Neurologist About

☐ Blank stares
☐ Picking at clothing
☐ Chewing/smacking of lips
☐ Periods of being dazed and confused
☐ Daydream-like behavior
☐ Falling over
☐ Duration of seizures
☐ Frequency of seizures
☐ What seizures look like
☐ Hand movements
☐ How you feel before and after a seizure
☐ How long it takes to regain awareness
☐ How you feel the seizures are affecting your quality of personal and work life

☐ Senses during seizure:
  ☐ Sights
  ☐ Smells
  ☐ Sounds

☐ Medication side effects:
  ☐ Dental changes
  ☐ Facial hair
  ☐ Insomnia
  ☐ Weight changes
  ☐ Dizziness
  ☐ Drowsiness
  ☐ Depression
  ☐ Memory loss
  ☐ Muscle twitches
  ☐ Blurred vision
  ☐ Nausea
  ☐ Other

Sensory during seizure:

☐ Sights
☐ Smells
☐ Sounds

Medication side effects:

☐ Dental changes
☐ Facial hair
☐ Insomnia
☐ Weight changes
☐ Dizziness
☐ Drowsiness
☐ Depression
☐ Memory loss
☐ Muscle twitches
☐ Blurred vision
☐ Nausea
☐ Other
Communication is the most important part of your doctor visit. To make the most of your time, you need to share as many details as you can about your experience with epilepsy, and ask your doctor specific questions.

This can be a daunting task if you do not know where to begin, what to share, and what to ask.

The Epilepsy Foundation Western/Central Pennsylvania offers this guide to help you prepare for your visit, and walk away afterward feeling that you've been heard and have the advice you need.

Get in touch with us for more information about epilepsy and our free programs and services:

- **Pittsburgh Office** (Headquarters)
  1323 Forbes Ave., Suite 102
  Pittsburgh, PA 15219
  800-361-5885 ■ 412-261-5880
  fax: 412-261-5361

- **Harrisburg Office**
  900 South Arlington Ave., Suite 126
  Harrisburg, PA 17109
  800-336-0301 ■ 717-541-0301
  fax: 717-541-1202

Or, visit our comprehensive website at [www.efwp.org](http://www.efwp.org).