

A number of health-related websites can help you make health decisions too. Government (.gov), educational (.edu), and not-for-profit (typically .org) websites usually always offer reputable and easy-to-follow information and advice.

To help you develop a home treatment plan, consult medically sound self-care books, and resources. Look for information from government agencies or through your local affiliates of health-serving organizations such as the American Lung Association or the American Red Cross.

1. Colds and flu
2. Backaches
3. Sprains and strains
4. Cuts and bruises
5. Headaches
6. Constipation
7. Allergies
8. Heartburn
9. Fever
10. Cough

With the help of sound self-care information, you may often safely and effectively treat these basic health concerns at home:

Top 10 Home Treatment List

If you are having strange and unusual pains or problems, it is a good idea to check with your doctor. Some examples include lumps, unexplained weight loss, changes in moles or freckles, blurred vision or unusual numbness or weakness. If you are having symptoms that seem to remain constant or get worse after several days of following your home treatment plan or your symptoms seem to return several times, again you should discuss these problems with your doctor.



Look Closely... Self-Care Means:

Making informed decisions regarding diagnosis and treatment of health problems through preventive care.



If you are experiencing severe chest pain, shortness of breath, bleeding, stomach pain, vomiting or other severe problems, you need to call for medical help. For life-threatening conditions, call 911, your local emergency access number, or go to a hospital. For all other conditions, call your doctor to find out your next step.

Home treatment is a great option for many illnesses and injuries, but sometimes a visit to the doctor is a must. Make sure to get medical attention if the symptoms you are experiencing are severe, seem strange and unusual, stick around for more than a few days, or constantly return.

GETTING MEDICAL HELP

The more you know about health problems, how to take care of health problems, and the health care delivery system, the more confident you will be that the choices you make are going to be safe and effective.

- » What treatments can I do at home now to help this medical condition?
- » Should I wait and see?
- » Is this life-threatening? Do I call 911 for help or go to the emergency room?
- » Should I call the doctor's office?
- » Should I go to the doctor?

Doctors and other health care professionals play an important role in your health—especially when you are sick or hurt. What do they have to gain? A happy patient perhaps? Payment for services? A repeat customer? No one has as much to gain from your health as you do—so make sure you are taking an active role! Put yourself in charge of your own health (and the health of your family). When a medical situation arises, ask yourself:

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
PREVENTION GUIDELINES:
www.wonder.cdc.gov

A PUBLICATION OF



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No one has as much to gain from your health as you do. Unlock the secrets of good health and take an active role in your own care.

You're In Charge... Because It's Your Own Health



Self-Care at Its Best





When you should... See a Doctor

Despite the healthiest of intentions we all still get sick. It's inevitable that we will all experience some sort of injury or illness: whether it's the common cold, a headache, or perhaps something more serious like chest pain. The good news is that with a little self-care knowledge, you can quickly, confidently, and effectively address these issues when they arise. Sound medical self-care information and advice can help you not only manage your own health and health care, but you also become better and more responsible consumers of health care.

CHOOSING A DOCTOR

One of the most important health care choices you will make is selecting a doctor. Here are a few helpful tips for selecting a doctor who will work for YOU.

- » Make sure your doctor accepts your health insurance.
- » Ask relatives and people you respect for recommendations.
- » Check with the local medical society. You can specify the type of doctor you are looking for by location, gender, specialty, and age. This may be particularly helpful if you are new in your community.
- » Grab intake forms. A great primary care physician wants to know somewhere between 5 and 20 pages of information about a person before they come in. If the intake form only asks about age, place of work, and insurance information, you may want to keep looking around.
- » Ask about office hours, staffing, and fees. Make sure your insurance is accepted by the hospital where the doctor sends patients.

Source: Self-Care — Published by the American Institute for Preventive Medicine

TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE A DOCTOR...

Whether you ultimately choose home treatment or decide to get professional medical help, the process is the same. Use this simple three-step process to determine your best treatment option.

#1: COLLECT

Collect as much information as you can about the injury or illness you're experiencing. How long have you had the problem? How much pain are you in? How did it happen? Has it happened before? What did you do then? Did it work? Do you have any resources like a self-care book or tool that tell you about possible treatments?

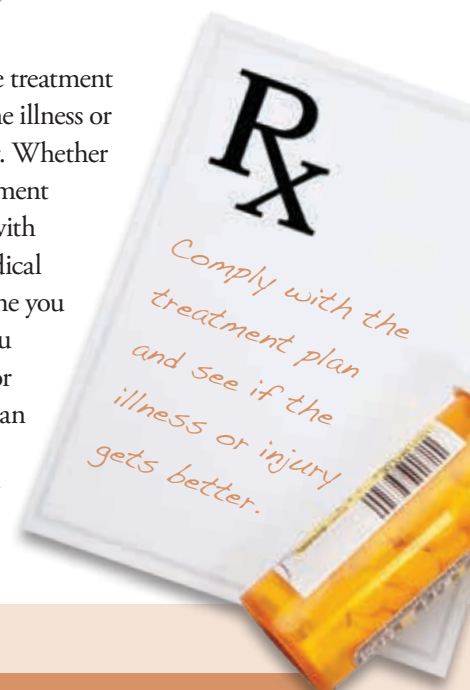
Accurate and complete information about your injury or illness is necessary to develop a treatment plan that is safe and effective. These are the same questions your health care professional might ask you. It's important to know the answers. Your treatment is often based on what you can tell the doctor about your condition.

#2: CREATE

Create a treatment plan. You might be comfortable using home treatments such as ice packs for a sprain or strain and warm salt water for a sore throat. You might even want to get a second opinion by calling your doctor, nurse, or physician's assistant and letting them know what you plan to do. If you decide to make a trip to see your doctor, make sure you take an active role in developing the treatment plan.

#3: COMPLY

Comply with the treatment plan and see if the illness or injury gets better. Whether following a treatment plan developed with the help of a medical professional or one you created alone, you are responsible for sticking to the plan and monitoring the condition for improvement.



YOU SHOULD PROBABLY

| IF YOU EXPERIENCE... | PRACTICE SELF-CARE | GO TO DOCTOR'S OFFICE | GO TO URGENT CARE CLINIC | IMMEDIATELY GO TO EMERGENCY ROOM |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Animal bites | | | x | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any life threatening or disabling condition • Chest pain • Severe difficulty breathing or shortness of breath • Severe abdominal or pelvic pain • Deep cuts or a stab wound that won't stop bleeding • Fractures with bones showing • Dehydration • Gunshot wound • Infant under 6 months requiring care • Abdominal pain or bleeding if you are pregnant • Loss of consciousness • Difficulty speaking, sudden dizziness or numbness in the face, arm or leg |
| Stitches | | | x | |
| X-rays | | | x | |
| Back pain | x (mild) | x | x | |
| Mild asthma | | x | x | |
| Minor headaches | x | x | x | |
| Sprains, strains | x (mild) | x | x | |
| Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea | | x | x | |
| Bumps, cuts, scrapes | x (minor) | x | x | |
| Burning with urination | | x | x | |
| Coughs, sore throat | x | x | x | |
| Ear or sinus pain | | x | x | |
| Eye swelling, irritation, redness or pain | | x | x | |
| Minor allergic reactions | | x | x | |
| Minor fevers, colds | x | x | | |
| Psychiatric illness | | x | | |
| Rashes, minor burns | | x | x | |
| Flu vaccinations | | x | x | |
| Constipation | x | | | |
| Heartburn | x | | | |
| WHO USUALLY PROVIDES CARE? | YOU | ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDER OR DOCTOR | ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDER OR DOCTOR | ED DOCTORS AND NURSES |