

Every Woman Should Be An Informed Patient

When you see a doctor or go to the hospital, it is important to be involved in your own care.

When you go to the doctor:

- ▶ Tell your doctors about all of the prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbs that you take. If possible, bring the bottles with you.
- ▶ Make sure your doctor knows of any allergies you have or any reactions you have had to medicines.
- ▶ If your doctor gives you a prescription for medicine, make sure you can read it.

Ask questions like:

What should I do if I have side effects?

What is this medicine for?

How do I take it?

What are the side effects?

How long do I take it for?

- ▶ When you pick up your medicine from the pharmacy, ask the pharmacist if you don't understand the directions on the bottle. Ask for written information about side effects.
- ▶ Bring to the doctor any articles you have seen that you have questions about. You may need to schedule extra time to discuss them.
- ▶ Know the first day your last period began, the date of your last Pap smear, and the date of your last mammogram.
- ▶ Bring your insurance information with you to the doctor and the pharmacy.

When you are in the hospital:

- ▶ If you are going to have surgery, be sure you and your doctor agree on exactly what will be done. If you have a question, **ASK**.
- ▶ If you can, choose a hospital where many people have had the procedure you are having.
- ▶ If you can, have a friend or family member go with you to the hospital. He or she can speak for you and help get things done.
- ▶ Make sure everyone involved in your care has all of your health information.
- ▶ If you have a test done, be sure to find out the results. You can ask your doctor or nurse.
- ▶ If you have a living will or healthcare power of attorney, be sure to bring a copy to the hospital with you.
- ▶ Before you leave the hospital, ask your doctor to explain what kind of treatment you will need at home, if any.

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.

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For more information about women's health issues, stop by our Resource Center at 2000 West First Street, Piedmont Plaza II, 1st Floor, Winston Salem, NC 27104, visit our website at <http://www.wakehealth.edu/WHCOE/> or contact us at (336) 713-4220.