



# Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

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What is my role in making and keeping medical appointments?

## Q: What is my role in making and keeping medical appointments?

**A:** If you need an appointment outside dialysis, it's best if you make it yourself. This gives you more control. You know what times you have open and when you have plans. Put the appointment slip where you will see it and remember to go. Some doctors' offices make reminder calls, but some don't.

**Call ahead to check on time:** We have all made appointments, arrived on time, and had to wait. Call before you leave home to see if the office is running late. For a better chance of being seen on time, ask for the first appointment of the day. If you want to have more time to talk to the doctor, ask for the last slot, or request a longer visit.

**Use appointment time well:** Set a goal for what you want to get out of a clinic visit. Write down your questions, and tell the doctor you have some things you want to ask about. Know your family history to help your doctor know what health problems you might be at risk for. Keep a log of symptoms or problems so you can be specific. If you have pain, how often? When and where? How bad is it on a scale of 1 to 10? What makes it better or worse? These kinds of details can help your doctor to help you.

**Know your insurance coverage:** Your health plan may limit who you see or how much they will pay for a visit. The balance of the bill that insurance doesn't cover will be yours to pay: ask how much it will cost

when you make the appointment. Bring your insurance card with you to the visit.

### What I can do to make the most of my clinic appointments:

- Keep a list of my questions for the doctor. Put them in priority order so I can ask the most important ones first.
- Bring along my symptom log so my doctor and I can look for patterns in what makes me feel better or worse.
- Tell my dialysis nurse when my appointments are scheduled, especially if they are right before or after my dialysis time.
- Visit module 3 of Kidney School™: *Working with Your Healthcare Team* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn more.