



## Welcome

Have you ever gone to see a medical doctor and wonder if you got the most out of that experience? You might have felt rushed or uncomfortable about asking questions. Have you ever been given a diagnosis with serious consequences and not understood exactly what it meant or what you should do next? Well you are not alone.

The AAWP was established in 2000 to give a voice to African Americans (AA) who have been historically excluded from health care decisions that affect their lives. The mission of The African American Wellness Project (AAWP) is to direct resources (dollars, services, information) towards empowering the African American Community to improve health outcomes and promote wellness.

### The Leadership of AAWP Includes

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It is our belief that while good health begins with diet and exercise, once you enter the health care system, you must be organized to get the most out of it.

This guide was developed to assist the African American community and other communities to better utilize the health care system. The most informed consumer gets the best care. That's true when you are shopping for food and other necessities and it's true for health care. This guide is intended to assist you in taking control of your physician visits.

### AAWP Contact Information:

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## Tips For Calling Your Doctor

### When Calling Your Doctor

At some point, you will probably need to call your doctor. Get the answers to these basic questions before that time comes:

*What are your doctor's office hours? Does the doctor work in more than one office?*

*What is the best time to call?*

*What is the doctor's policy for returning calls?*

*Who should you speak with if the doctor isn't available?*

*What is the phone number for emergency calls or after-hours calls?*

### When You Reach Your Doctor On The Phone

*Tell your symptoms and problems. Write them down and keep the list by the phone so you don't have to remember them. (Have someone else call the doctor for you if you are unable to do it yourself.)*

*Report results of home tests or symptoms that you have been keeping track of, such as a temperature of 101 degrees for more than a day.*

*Ask the doctor what to do. Be sure to write it down.*

*Have your pharmacist's phone number handy in case the doctor needs to prescribe any medications.*

*Ask the doctor if you should call back or come into the office.*

*Ask the doctor when you should go to the emergency room. Write down the symptoms to watch for.*



## Questions You Should Ask Your Doctor After Your Visit Is Complete

### About Tests

Do I need more testing? If so, what? How much do these tests cost and will my insurance cover it?

How often should I have these tests?

Do I call to schedule the test or will your office do it for me?

How do I prepare for any tests I may need?

When and how will I get the test results?

### About Medications

Why do I need this particular medicine?

What is the name of the drug?

How and when should I take it?

Are there any foods, drinks or other things I should avoid while taking this medicine?

What should I do if I forget to take it?

What are the known side effects? Is this drug known to cause birth defects? (Important for women who are pregnant or planning a future birth.)

How long will I have to take this medicine?

Is there a generic equivalent of this drug?

How will this new medicine interact with other drugs I'm currently taking?

Are there any non-drug measures that work as well?

### About Specialty Care

Should I see a specialist?

Does this specialist work out of more than one office?

Can you recommend a specialist? Is he or she board certified?

How soon should I be seen by this specialist?

What if I can't get an appointment for a month or more? Should I try to see someone else?

