

# October 2012

## Health Topic

Sturgeon Bay United Methodist Church  
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## Make the Most of Your Doctor Visit



As Parish Nurse I sometimes hear complaints from people about their visit with their doctor. "He/She did not answer my questions", There was no time to talk about my concerns." "I don't understand why I was put on another medication." Just as times have changed in how people relate to their health care, we also need to change how we approach our trip to the doctor. When I first started in nursing patients in the hospital would just put out their hands and take whatever medication was put in them. They did not understand their diagnosis, but just let the doctor take care of everything. Now I go into a patient's room and they ask about every medication and what it is for. They have questions about their tests and what the results mean. Patients are more participants in their care.

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office requires  
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So with the visit to the doctor, we need to do some preparation and educate ourselves so that we get the most out of the office visit. Here are a few tips, but the key is communication. As Paul was preaching to the Galatians, we need to communicate back to the one who has taught and is teaching us, about our health and about taking care of ourselves. Our trip to the doctor's office requires preparation, patience, and participation.

- In **preparation** it is important to write down the top three things you want to discuss during your appointment. Rank those three things so that you are sure to cover what is most important. It is so easy to become

- distracted during an appointment with side conversation that you forget everything you thought was important before.
- Also in **preparation** it is important to bring along any information about your problem – medication bottles, an article you had questions about, a list of symptoms and any life changes. When you make your doctor appointment be specific about your reason and ask if there is anything you should bring along. Ask for the amount of time you need for your appointment. A 15 minute appointment only allows time for a couple of questions.
- Use **patience** in the office visit as you try to focus on the purpose of the appointment Often it helps to have someone come to the appointment with you to help keep the conversation on track and to have another pair of ears for the instructions the doctor will give.
- Be honest with your doctor as you **participate** in the visit. Be sure not to say just what you want your doctor to hear. And make sure you understand your doctor's orders. Jot down some notes about the instructions and why it is important for you to follow the instructions.
- Take an active role in your doctor's plan by following his/her recommendations for follow-up. **Participate** in your commitment to staying well!

*"Let him that is taught in the word  
communicate unto him that  
teacheth in all good things."  
Galatians 6:6*

### Health News Notes

- **Parish Nurse hours** 10am–2pm Thursdays.
- **Blood Pressure check** on October 7th after both services
- **Parkinson Support Group** Thursday October 4th, 1–2:30pm topic: "Your doctor/hospital visit" 12noon Webinar for newly diagnosed Parkinson Disease patients from National Parkinson Foundation.
- **Education Program for those living with someone with Alzheimer's Disease.** Starting on Wednesday October 3rd from 4:30–6:30pm then on the next two Wednesdays. October 31st, November 14th and 28th for Middle-stage Alzheimer's and December 5th and 12 for Late-stage Alzheimer's disease. Talk to Carol to register. Everyone is welcome and these sessions are free.
- **Health Fair at YMCA October 23rd.** Call the YMCA at 743–4949 any time after October 3rd to register for cholesterol and bone density screening.

Whether it is at home, at church, or at the doctor's office communication is the key to having a productive conversation. Your doctor is coming from a different frame of mind than you are – so he/she cannot treat your problem unless they can really understand what it is. Coming with a complete list of symptoms and a list of anything that might be related, can really help with that communication. Preparation, patience and participation could be key in our church goal setting too... This is a good time to practice!