

Communicating with Health Care Providers

If you have concerns about a cold, the flu, allergies, or other health issues, it is important to be able to communicate effectively with your health care providers. This activity will help you learn strategies for effective communication with health care providers.

Each team will be assigned a scenario. Team members should work together to create two skits:

- a skit that illustrates a patient using poor communication with the health care provider.
- a skit that illustrates a patient using good communication with the health care provider.

1. Circle the scenario assigned to your team.

Talking with a Pharmacist Talking to the pharmacist at the local pharmacy to get help with selecting medicine for allergy symptoms.	Talking with a Nurse Talking to a nurse who handles phone calls at a doctor's office to get advice about allergy symptoms.	Talking with a Doctor Talking with a doctor at the doctor's office about allergy symptoms.
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2. Before you write the scripts, use the **Teen Tips: Communicating with Health Care Providers** on the next page and the **Ask Me 3 brochure** to get ideas for what might be included in your scripts.
3. Write the "poor communication" script that will be acted by two team members.
4. Write the "good communication" script that will be acted by the other two team members.

Team members should be prepared to act out the skits during class.

Teen Tips: Communicating with Health Care Providers

Here are some tips to help you communicate with health care providers:

- **Tell your provider everything you can about yourself, what you do, and how you feel.** The more information the provider has, the more helpful he or she can be.
- **Say what you think** - and be honest.
- **Be assertive.** Be nice, but persistent.
- **Bring a list of questions and concerns.** It's easy to forget things when you're sitting there, in the provider's office. A written list of questions, concerns, or other things you want to make sure to tell the provider will help you remember everything that's been on your mind.
- Tell the provider to be honest and to tell you everything. **You're entitled to know all** about your condition, your treatment, and any options that might be available to you.
- **Ask questions.** Remember - there's no such thing as a stupid question. If you don't understand an answer to a question, ask the provider to explain it again until you do understand it.
- **Write down what the provider says.** That will help you remember later on.
- **Bring someone with you,** if you'd like. Sometimes it helps to have someone else there for support, to hear what the provider has to say, or to ask questions that you might not think of.
- **If you need help, ask for it.**
- Call back if you have any questions after the appointment. Sometimes questions come up after you get home, or you forget something the provider said. **It's ok to call and follow up with more questions.**

Adapted from the Massachusetts Office of Health and Human Services