

Five Steps to Improve Your Health Care

The critical first step is make sure you are on the “same page” with health care providers. To do this you also must know the most important facts about yourself. These facts are summarized below. Or more simply go to:

<https://howsyourhealth.org/wmi/>

During the past 4 weeks, how much have you been bothered by emotional problems such as feeling anxious, depressed, irritable, or sad?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	QUITE A BIT	EXTREMELY
During the past 4 weeks, how much bodily pain have you generally had?				
No pain.	Very mild pain.	Mild Pain	MODERATE PAIN	SEVERE PAIN
How many different prescription medications are you currently taking more than three days a week?				
None	1-2	3-5	MORE THAN 5	
Do you think that any of your pills are making you sick?				
YES	No	MAYBE, I AM NOT SURE	I am not taking any pills	
How confident are you that you can control and manage most of your health problems?				
Very confident	SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	NOT VERY CONFIDENT	I do not have any health problems	

INSTRUCTIONS:

- ✓ Pick the one answer that describes you best for each of the five questions.
 - ✓ Whenever your answer is in **BIG PRINT**, give yourself one point. You can have at most 5 points and at least, no points.
 - ✓ Add up your points. People with a sum of two or higher have an increased risk of using the hospital or emergency room during the next year. Therefore, they need to make sure that doctors or nurses are aware of the needs and that they have good communication with all health professionals. They also benefit when they complete full check-up using www.HowsYourHealth.org and bring the results (the Action Form) to their clinical appointments. HowsYourHealth also automatically creates a personal health record that can be used to keep track of their progress.
 - ✓ A person with a sum of one should consider taking similar action as a person with a sum or two or more.
 - ✓ If you are **SOMEWHAT OR NOT VERY CONFIDENT**, ask yourself “what would it take for you to be able to say that you are very confident that you can control most of your health problems during the next two months?” Write that plan here and share it with someone who can help you.
-

Step Two:

If you have any ongoing health problems get a consistent doctor or health care team.

Cost to you: Nothing except persistence.

Cost to the health system: Nothing

Current situation: Less than 50% of Americans have the same doctor over a five-year period.

Step Three:

Get good health information.

Cost to you: Your time.

Cost to the health system: Nothing.

Current Situation: “Health Information” for preteens and teens is generally whatever a peer tells them. Adults use many non-physician sources of health information such as: Books, pamphlets of the internet; friends or family; pharmacists, health fairs.

Step Four:

“Do it yourself” assessment, behavioral change, and problem self-management.

Cost to you: Your time, effort, and commitment.

Cost to the health system: Nothing

Current Situation: Our health behaviors may contribute to about 50% of early deaths and a lot of illness. People still smoke despite its huge impact on health; obesity is increasing everywhere; sexually transmitted diseases increase; the list goes on!

Step Five:

Demand the health system get on the “same page” and support your self-management.

Cost to you: Your time, effort, and commitment.

Cost to the health system: Nothing in the long term; in fact, waste reducing and cost saving when the health system is reorganized to deliver better “same page” care.

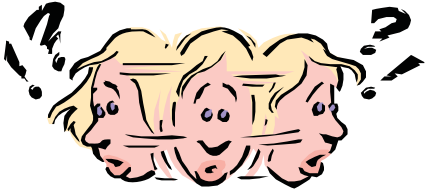
Current Situation: The health system is frequently not “on the same page” with patients; productive communications are not the focus of the system; errors, harms and suboptimal care are the results; resistance to change by existing educational, research, training, and patient care systems.

**IF YOU HAVE THE INTEREST AND TIME,
READ THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY FROM HOWS YOUR HEALTH**



**Are You and Your Doctor
Ready to Improve Your Health and Health Care?**

Are You and Your Doctor Ready to Improve Your Health and Health Care?



You now have a good understanding of the promise of “same page” care. Now it’s time to help your Doctor make care not just “as good as it gets” but as good as it can be! (If you HATE TESTS, don’t worry. This brief test is for your doctor and all the other people who work in the office! But don’t do anything with it until you have finished the book.)

Dear Doctor,

If you and your office staff all complete the first six items of this brief survey, you will receive a diagnosis of how well your practice is working. The second four items suggest several changes that make care better.

Inside a Doctor’s Office...The Self-Rating Questions:

How is Team-Work?

1. In this office, I always have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree (1 point)
2. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree (1 point)

3. Our office staff works like a team. We have high levels of trust and collaboration. We appreciate complementary roles and recognize that all contribute to a shared purpose.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree (1 point)
4. I would recommend this office practice as a great place to work.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Unsure
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree (1 point)

How is Communication?

5. How easy is it to ask anyone a question about the way we care for patients?
- Very easy (1 point)
 - Easy
 - Difficult
 - Very difficult
6. Technology in this office smoothly links patient care with a rich information environment. The information environment is designed to support the work of the clinical team.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Unsure
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree (1 point)

questions continued next page...

Immediate Improvement Questions

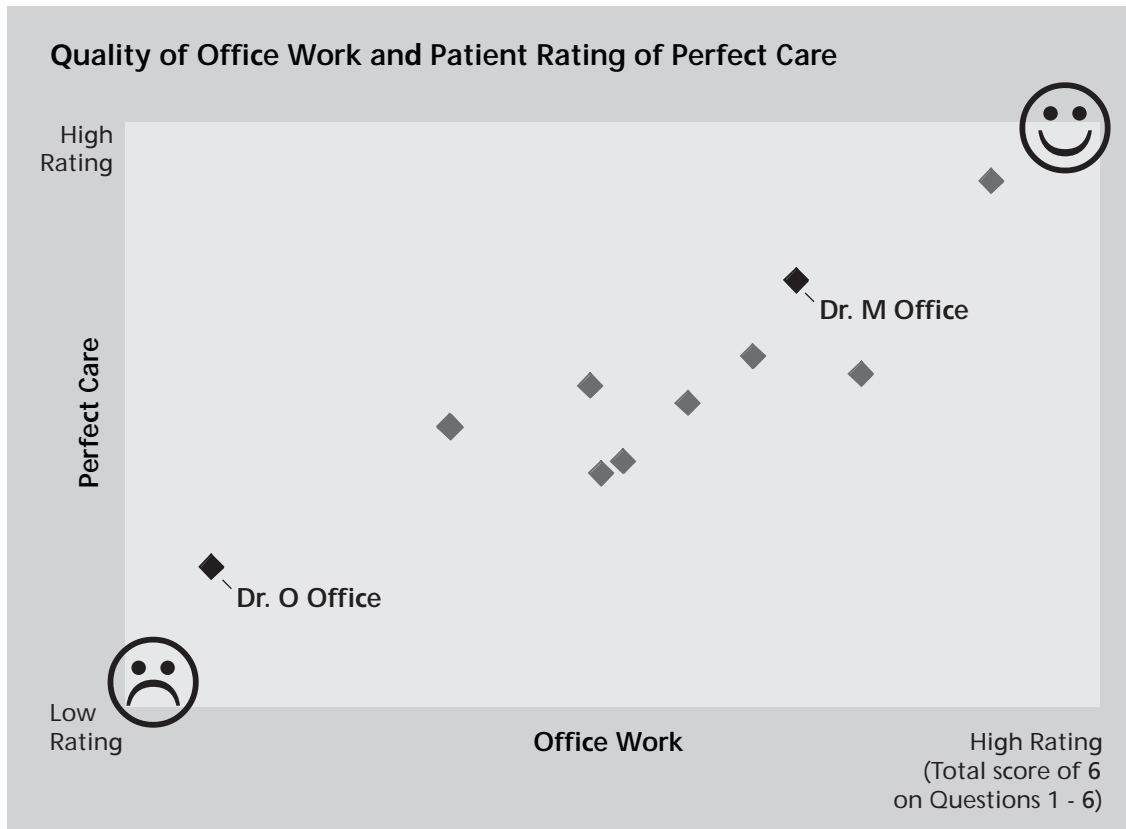
- a. Our office has full-staff meeting (doctors, nurses, clinical assistants, office staff) at least every six weeks and these meetings focus on how we can best work together to better address our patients' needs.
 yes no
- b. Our office keeps an up-to-date display of information about our performance.
 yes no
- c. Our office knows how confident individual patients are in controlling and managing most their health problems or concerns.
 yes no
- d. Our office has regular meetings with groups of patients (either in a patient advisory board or in scheduled patient group visits).
 yes no

How well a doctor's office works is strongly related to the type of care and service the patients receive.

The six questions (Question #1-6) for a doctor's office are strongly related to how often Americans will rate "perfect care."

Questions (a-d) remind doctors' offices of simple ways to make the office work better. For example, less than 3 of 10 doctor's offices have brief, regular meetings of all people who work in the office to discuss how to make the office work better. Without such meetings, improvement in care is unlikely.

The **GRAPH** on the next page shows how strongly patients' rating of practice quality are related to the way the office staff responds to the six questions.



Additional testing by more than 400 office staff and 1200 patients showed the same pattern. Regardless of patients' illness burden or level of poverty the pattern was similar.

The Promise of Same Page Care

“You should always be careful when reading books about health. Otherwise you might die of a misprint.”

- Mark Twain

Why have we defied Mark Twain’s advice and written a book about health care?

Part of the answer is that it is too big a subject to ignore. All of us are involved one way or another in health care. Eighty percent of Americans visit a doctor every two years and 80% of us take some type of pill ever week. In the last 10 years, we have increased our consumption of medications by 50%!

In 1950 each American spent \$500 (in current dollars) for health care; now we spend \$5000 per person. In comparison, the Spanish, Canadians and Swiss spend between \$2000 and \$3000. A large portion (35-50%) of the American public agrees that the health care system is broken. **(In 2018 this cost difference is worse!!)**

Another justification for writing this book is based on scientific evidence: test results show that the tools and approaches described in this book will add value to health care.

How’s Your Health? places the highest priority on the front-line of health care. The “front-line” is where the problems are real, not abstract, understandable, not obscure.

The “front-line” is where Esther and her mother work with the health professionals to understand and manage



“HowsYourHealth, a simple web-based health survey tool, is proving remarkably useful to a wide variety of users, including patients and providers alike, with potential rewards not only in satisfaction but also in cost savings and improved clinical outcomes.

“This survey, which asks a series of multiple choice questions and takes about ten minutes to complete, is used by thousands of patients and consumers on their own and through programs sponsored by employers, health care systems and physician groups.”

***Institute for Health Care Improvement
2004***

diabetes. The “front-line” are the health professional “waiters” who listen, takes the orders, and start the chain of events that ought to result in a 100% satisfying health care for their customers. The “front-line” is us. The “front-line” is our son, or daughter, or parent.

At this “front-line” not being on the “same page” is strongly linked to errors and harms, unwanted variation in care, and many wasted costs. *How’s Your Health?* offers easy-to-follow steps to improve “same page” care and solve personal problems.

Four Steps

Step One: If you have any ongoing health problems get a consistent doctor or health care team.

Cost to you: Nothing except persistence.

Cost to the health system: Nothing.

Current situation: Less than 50% of Americans have the same doctor over a five-year period.

Twenty-five years ago, as director of a large clinical group, I had to make a decision. Should the system make an extraordinary effort to ensure high levels of continuity between patients and the health professionals or was it safe and acceptable to have less stringent continuity of care?

A study involving 700 adults answered the question. Some received very high continuity and the others received “usual” care. Two years later the results showed that having the same health professionals was a very healthy choice: patients with the same health care professional were more satisfied and used 30% less hospital care than the patients who less often saw the same health professionals.

This study put to rest any question about the value of continuity. Continuity has many good impacts. Insist on it!

Step Two: Get good health information.

Cost to you: Your time.

Cost to the health system: Nothing.

Current Situation: “Health Information” for preteens and teens is generally whatever a peer tells them. Adults use many non-physician sources of health information such as:

- Books and pamphlets: 40-50%
- Friends and family: 35-45%
- Pharmacists: 25-35%
- Internet: 20-30%
- Health Fairs: 5-15%

Less than half of the information given by health professionals is easy to understand. In contrast, patients consider more than half of the information on the internet equal to or better than that received in their doctor’s office. However, it is often difficult to find what you want or what matters to you among the thousands of internet health sites. Most of these sites electronically track you, have something to sell, or badly overstate opinions. For this reason we urge familiarity with two reliable gateways to health information on the internet. Both will direct you to other high quality, non-commercial sources of information. Both are available in English and Spanish:

- medlineplus.org (encyclopedic)
- www.howsyourhealth.org (“what matters” by age).

Step Three: “Do it yourself” assessment, behavioral change, and problem self-management.

Cost to you: Your time, effort, and commitment.

Cost to the health system: Nothing

Current Situation: Our health behaviors may contribute to about 50% of early deaths and a lot of illness. People still smoke despite its huge impact on health; obesity is increasing everywhere; sexually transmitted diseases increase; the list goes on!

None of us live perfectly healthy lives. It is hard to do what is best. When given advice by a doctor, 25% of us will not follow the advice. We most often don't follow the advice because the doctor and we are not “on the same page.” But 25-40% of the time it seems too difficult to follow the advice.

Nevertheless, over time each of our attempts to improve a behavior or solve a health problem adds up. For example, many younger smokers do quit as they get older. About 25% of American drinkers stop drinking as they age.

The more we are supported – surrounded by persons who know how to manage these issues – the more likely we will be successful. Advice that is tailored to “what matters” is easier to understand and follow.

When we use the HowsYourHealth assessment (about every 2-5 years), we check-up on how we are doing. We receive up-to-date information to help us do better. If we need to solve problems, the HowsYourHealth Problem-Solving program (done as often as needed) is available to keep us on the path to better health. Use the blog on HowsYourHealth to share ideas, too.

Step Four: Demand the health system get on the “same page” and support your self-management.

Cost to you: Your time, effort, and commitment.

Cost to the health system: Nothing in the long term; in fact, waste reducing and cost saving when the health system is reorganized to deliver better “same page” care.

Current Situation: The health system is frequently not “on the same page” with patients; productive communications are not the focus of the system; errors, harms and suboptimal care are the results; resistance to change by existing educational, research, training, and patient care systems.

Health systems designed to support productive communication always result in better care. The speed with which professional health systems focus on communication “at the front line” depends on the speed with which the message of *How’s Your Health?* is pushed by persons like you.

When you are in a doctor’s office, you are often asked to remember many things. Wouldn’t it be great if you were routinely re-contacted by phone to find out how a prescribed care plan is working or to receive reinforcement about changes you are trying to make? Wouldn’t it be great if e-mail were available for you to ask questions, get results, or refill medications?

Despite the obvious advantage for “same page” care to patients, health professionals worry about the hassle (and loss of revenue) from using telephone care or e-mail.

In fact, the patients helped most by telephone care are generally those for whom the office staff is already spending a lot of time in rework--re-asking the same

question, picking up problems that could have been identified earlier, etc. Most practices are finding that Email is a very useful tool to increase efficiency and communication. Therefore, telephone and E-mail time spent by the practice to truly get “same page” care should be offset by time saved from frustrating waste.

Remember Esther and her mother? Even if Esther and her mother had excellent telephone follow-up from the office visit by phone and used the *HowsYourHealth* web-site and its “blog,” they might have unanswered questions about living with diabetes. Shared medical appointments (also known as group visits) enable patients, such as Esther’s mother, to spend up to 90 minutes with clinicians and other patients. Group visits work because the 8-14 participants learn how to manage their problems and their concerns from each other. Participants may attend many or only one session. We always find that once health care professionals have been involved in a group visit, they improve the style of interaction with their patients. They listen better and they become much better at letting patients take control of their own care.

The evidence is overwhelming that many of the problems with American health care stem from its inability to place health professionals and you on the “same page.” *HowsYourHealth* and the changes in health care it supports are specifically designed to improve “same page” care.

We recognize that that many of the financial and organizational difficulties in health care are not going to be solved by “same page” care alone. But getting on the “same page” is a very important and easily implemented way to improve health and health care.

It may take a long time before the entire health care system can deliver “same page”, safe, effective health care in a timely and efficient way. Take these actions to minimize your risk for harm while you wait for higher quality health care.

Risk Factors

Categories that Place You at Risk For Harm	Risk Increase	What You Can Do to Reduce Risk
You think your medicines are making you sick (see Note 1 at far right)	300%	Tell the doctor that your pills may be making your ill. Keep a diary of your pills and when you are ill.
Poor access to care (see Note 2)	150%	Find offices that are willing to telephone patients, use e-mail, or offer same-day appointments.
You don't feel confident managing health problems	130%	Make sure the doctor or nurse knows about your lack of confidence. Use "Problem Solving" on www.howsyourhealth.org . Ask about Shared Medical Visits.
The care you receive often wastes your time (see Note 3)	100%	Work with the office by serving on a patient advisory board. Find an efficient office.
You are taking three or more medicines (see Note 1)	90%	Review your medications with your doctor and try to reduce the number. Keep careful track of what, when, and why you take medications.
You have financial problems	30%	This risk is often related to access. (See Note 2 at right.) Demand good access and same page care regardless of your wealth.

Notes to table:

- 1. Medicines.** Among Americans with chronic diseases, about 25% report that their medicines may be making them ill and about 20% do not take their medicines because of side effects. Another 10% take medications despite serious problems of which their doctor seems unaware. About 30% have not had their medicines formally reviewed in the past two years.
- 2. Access.** About 15% of all adult Americans rate that it is not easy to see their doctor; 30% if they are low income. About 25% of all Americans have difficulty seeing a specialist. When a doctor is seen, about 20% of Americans report that the doctor did not spend enough time. Full access to medications is limited by medication cost for 35% of all Americans.
- 3. Efficiency.** About 40% of Americans report that the care they receive is inefficient. Common examples of inefficiency are retelling the same story, the doctor does not have needed medical records or test results, and there is duplicate testing.

How do you get doctors, nurses, and other health professionals to catch the “same page” metaphor and the importance of HowsYourHealth and its related technologies?

**Is Your Health Care
Less than Perfect?**

If Yes, Write a Prescription to
Your Doctor for:
www.IdealMedicalPractices.org
or www.IdealMedicalHome.org

Directions:

Please take one dose of this
improvement program daily until
your practice is more enjoyable
and efficient and your patients
brag about their
high quality of care.



Before her mother became ill, Esther felt that it was not her job to help health professionals catch metaphors. But after her mother became ill, Esther quickly developed a different perspective. She learned that most health professionals and health systems want to do better. They just need proven, specific methods and tools to improve care. They need to catch the “same page” metaphor.

To help them catch the importance of *How's Your Health* and other methods of care improvement, we make available without charge www.IdealMedicalPractices.org to health professionals. This easy-to-use program is based on years of testing and refinement so that it requires very little time to complete.

We recognize that you are busy and that health care is usually not a “100%” issue for you. But when it is 100% for you, a family member, or someone you care deeply about, you will benefit from this book. Consider *How's Your Health?* an important preventive medicine that is easy to take now. Ultimately the quality of your health and your health care is not what the health system does “to” you; it what the health system does “with” you.

Wally, Louise and Doctor X

Wally is one of my patients. Wally is 80 and should have died several years ago from his hard arteries, severe heart failure, and mild kidney failure.

But Wally has Louise!! Louise understands every medicine Wally uses and adjusts them based on how he is doing, how much he weighs, and how well he is breathing. They call me whenever they have questions or problems...which is quite rare. They are prepared for his death if Wally should get very sick. They do not want aggressive treatments.

Despite Wally's problems both he and Louise live very active lives. They recently traveled a great distance on vacation where Wally was hospitalized for a mild pneumonia. After two days in the hospital the doctors wanted Wally to have surgery on his prostate and special heart tests at another hospital.

Louise called. She informed me that Wally now looked quite good...better than the many times she had managed his illnesses at home. He was eating, walking, and breathing well.

I talked to Doctor X. Dr. X clearly wanted to treat Wally's abnormal lab tests which were actually better than usual. We could not get Dr. X to agree with Louise, Wally, and me that Wally would do fine at home. Dr. X. was on his own page, not Wally's.

Louise insisted and Wally went home. Dr. X gave Wally and Louise completely new prescriptions with no explanation of what they were for or how to use them. The prescriptions cost four times more than Wally's usual medicines. Louise resumed Wally's usual medicines.

Wally did fine.



PostScript: Using HowYourHealth

Getting Started

Go to www.howsyourhealth.org
or www.healthconfidence.org

HowYourHealth home page

Choose **Begin Your Health Checkup** near the middle of the home page.

If you received a pass code from your community, your doctor, your employer, or a health system, enter the code or choose the name from the pull down menu. If you do not have a code just choose the option for people who do not have a code.

The screenshot shows the HowsYourHealth.org website. At the top left is the logo with a stethoscope and a smiley face. The main heading reads "Your Personal Guide for the Best Health and Medical Care" with the tagline "It's Easy, Completely Confidential, and It Works!". To the right is a "HON CODE" logo. Below the heading is a green bar. The main content area has two sections: "Now Enter Your Postal Zip Code to receive information tailored to your region (leave blank if you do not know your zip code)" with a text input field below it; and "If your doctor or employer gave you an access code, please enter it here. (Leave blank and continue if you do not have a code)" with another text input field below it. At the bottom are "Back" and "Continue" buttons. A small footer at the very bottom reads "Web Quiz v3.0 Last reviewed: 01/2017 © 1997-2017 FNXC Corporation and Trustees of Dartmouth College. All Rights Reserved."

Enter your access code or choose the option for people who do not have a code.

Don't overlook the opportunity to help others. For example, parents and friends will need to complete HowsYourHealth for children and very old or frail persons. About 25% of the poor need assistance.

HowsYourHealth is completely private. You are not asked to record your name to use HowsYourHealth. Your computer is not electronically identified.


Take Action

Once you complete the survey, you receive a report that summarizes the important issues that you have identified. It refers to readings that will help you manage problems. You will also receive an Action Form to take or e-mail to your doctor or nurse. (Samples are shown on the following pages.)

Even if you carefully prepare for an office visit, you may not have the vocabulary and means to communicate what really matters to you. The advantage of the Action Form is that allows you and your doctor or nurse to quickly and specifically identify areas in which better communication and education is needed. It's the tool to get them on the "same page" with you. The Action Form makes Esther's mother more than a "sugar."

When a doctor or nurse is busy and can't deal with all of the problems on the Action Form in one day, they know that before the next meeting their patients can look at pertinent readings offered by the web-site. This is a "win" for them and a "win" for their patients.

Sample report



Congratulations

Your Checkup is Now Complete
✓Means That You Have Seen
Choose Any Button To Review Now
Save Your Personal Plan to Review Later

Your summary

Thank you for completing the Check Up. This summarizes possible health concerns and problems in four areas. You or a health professional may wish to address them.

From reading your responses to this questionnaire, we learned that you feel your overall health to be good.

In reporting your quality of life, you indicated things have been going pretty good.

1. **HABITS:** Based on your responses to the questions you have some lifestyle and behaviors that can harm you now or cause your problems in the future.

- You may wish to quit smoking.
- You may wish to exercise more regularly.

Over the next two months you said that you might want to work on quitting smoking and that you are not very confident of success.

2. **RISK for EMERGENCIES or FALLS:** Your risk for being admitted to the hospital or having to use the emergency room in the future seems to be much higher than most people. Your risk of falls is higher than most.

3. **CARE QUALITY AND YOUR CONFIDENCE:** Your answers to the Check Up suggest that there may be opportunities to improve your healthcare and your ability to manage your health. If there are any areas of your healthcare that you feel should be improved, discuss them with your doctor or nurse during your next visit.

4. **PREVENTION:** You report that these recommended preventions have been done:

- A mammogram for breast cancer
- A test for fat (cholesterol) in the blood
- A test for cancer of the bowel

Based on your age and health, recommended immunizations are: "flu", pneumonia, and zoster; you should have had DPT.

Over the next five years, many of these recommended preventions may have to be repeated. For a list of what your recommended preventions might be in the future go to [HealthFinder.gov](#) and enter your future age.

You can play an important part by having good communication with your doctors and nurses and knowing what to do about your problems and health. Please read the "chapters" below at any time by just clicking or choosing them.

- [Risks: What Are My Chances?](#)
- [Exercise and Eating Well](#)
- [Health Habits and Health Decisions](#)
- [Common Medical Conditions](#)
- [Daily Activities and Managing Limitations](#)
- [Feeling and Emotional Care](#)
- [Pain](#)
- [Tiredness and Sleep Problems](#)
- [Urine Trouble](#)
- [Women's Health](#)

Sample action form

✓ Your summary

Print this action form and take it to your doctor to improve the medical care you receive. This form is intended for your doctor or nurse.

Your (Patient) Name: _____

Date: 2018-04-17 Age: 65-69 Gender: Female BMI: 26.6

✓ Your Management Form and Diary

WHAT MATTERS TO EVERYONE

BOTHERSOME PAIN: Present

Ask: How much is pain making it difficult for you to be confident? *_making it very difficult _ making it somewhat difficult _ Not much impact*

BOTHERSOME EMOTIONS: Present

Ask: How much are feelings making it difficult for you to be confident? *_making it very difficult _ making it somewhat difficult _ Not much impact*

POSSIBLE MEDICATION RISKS: Present

Many medicines: Ask: Have they been recently checked?
May be causing illness: Ask: Which ones and how?

HEALTH CONFIDENCE: Not Very Confident

What might improve health confidence? "I keep my blood pressure and diabetes in control most of the time. But I don't really know how to mix my pain pills with the others. One of them may be making me feel sick." Ask: Problem most difficult to manage _____

ASSETS

FUNCTION	HABITS	KNOWLEDGE	PREVENTION
Social Activities - Slight limitations	Generally healthy eating	Home Hazards	Had mammogram
Social Support - As much as wanted	Generally avoids accident risks	Keep Track Meds	Had cholesterol test
Life is going - Pretty Good	Does not drink excessively		Had bowel cancer test
	Takes Medications Regularly		

NEEDS

FUNCTION (*italics = clinician unaware*): Difficulty with daily activities; *Difficulty with feelings*; Difficulty with pain; Difficulty with physical fitness; Difficulty with overall health

SYMPTOMS/BOTHERS: Trouble urinating/wetting; Joint pain; Trouble sleeping; Dizziness, Falling; Medications maybe making ill

CONCERNS OR FAMILY HISTORY: Health care system; Family history of cancer

HABITS: Smoker interested in quitting; Not Exercising Regularly

PREVENTION: Lacks essential money; More than 3 medications

IMMUNIZATIONS: "flu", pneumonia, and zoster. Should have had DPT, Varicella (if not immuno-compromised).

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Chronic Diseases: High blood pressure; Diabetes; Arthritis

Risk for ED or Hospital Use: High

Risk for Falls if age 65+: Increased

Habit Change Plan for next 2 months: quit smoking but patient is not very confident of success. "I have tried and failed many times. I don't really know what to do."

Patient reports medical harm in past year

SUGGESTED READING AND EDUCATION

Suggested Readings and Helpful Links

Your results from HowsYourHealth will include readings based on your responses to the survey.

Sample reading suggestions

Based on your responses to the **HowsYourHealth** questionnaire, we recommend that you read the following sections of the **How's Your Health** booklet. You may read the chapters online by clicking on them below:

- [Exercise and Eating Well](#)
- [Health Habits and Health Decisions](#)
- [Common Medical Conditions](#)
- [Daily Activities and Managing Limitations](#)
- [Pain](#)
- [Skin Problem](#)
- [Women's Health](#)

You can review these readings online any time. To return to the readings at a later time, merely re-enter www.howsyourhealth and give your age and gender and then the readings are re-offered to you. You do not have to answer the questions again.

Helpful links to the best non-commercially sponsored web-sites are included (sample shown next page). For example, for additional information go to www.medline-plus.org. For an important treatment or testing decision, use the link to www.cochrane.org. If your topic is covered, this is the most up to date information about certain conditions and treatments.

We also suggest several “risk” calculators to help you estimate the impact of your current health and habit on your future.

Sample helpful links
for additional
information and risk
calculators

More Health Information Links

How's Your Health Readings

- [Risks: What Are My Chances?](#)
- [Child Chapters](#)
- [Adolescent Chapters](#)
- [Adult Chapters](#)
- [Geriatric Chapters](#)
- [Very Ill Chapters](#)
- [How's Your Care \(Hospital\) Chapters](#)
- [Take a Free Book Based on Thousands of How'sYourHealth Users](#)

For Best General Information go to:

- [medlineplus \(.gov\)](#)
- [healthfinder.gov](#)
- [familydoctor.org](#)

The "gov" sites also have good links for special diseases.

For Costs of Common Treatments and Tests

[Healthcare Bluebook \(http://healthcarebluebook.com\)](http://healthcarebluebook.com)

For Diagnosing Symptoms:

[Mayo Clinic Symptom Checker](#)

For the best information about a testing or treatment decision go to:

(Pros and cons for many common decisions)

www.cochrane.org

(The language is technical, so you may need help.)

To Calculate Your Future Risk for cancer and some other diseases:

www.yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu

To Calculate Your Future Risk for Death from Heart Disease:

www.riskscore.org.uk

(There are many calculators and many overestimate your risk. This one is easy to complete and does not seem to overestimate your risk for future heart disease, stroke or hardening of the arteries.)

For Best Information About:

Healthy Eating

- recipes.heart.org/.../delicious-decisions
- www.americanheart.org/NutritionCenter
- www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource

Exercise and Fitness

- www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm
- familydoctor.org/exercise-habit

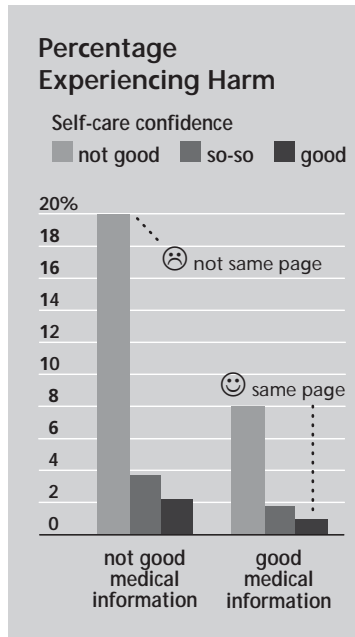
Quitting Smoking

- [www.cancer.org/\(quitting_smoking\)](http://www.cancer.org/(quitting_smoking))

Alcohol Use and Drinking

- www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health

To quickly choose other links, click the 'BACK' button.



Self-Care and Problem Solving

Information alone will not improve your health and health care. Good self-care and problem-solving skills are also needed, as illustrated in the chart at the left. HowsYourHealth offers some helpful tools to improve self-care and problem-solving.

If you have a medical condition such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, or heart disease, you will receive a Condition Management Form. The information on the Condition Management Form (see below) is tailored to chronic conditions. You should use it to anticipate what you need to know and do. It also enables you to compare the care you were receiving to good standards of care.

Having a copy of what you have reported is available in your **personal health plan**. This allows you to keep track of your health activities. Read about all the possibilities it offers you on the next page

✓ Your summary

✓ Your Management Form and Diary

Condition Management Form	
Persons who have conditions or diseases like yours can GREATLY improve their health and their medical care by three simple steps.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning about how the care you have been getting might be made better. 2. Learning if there are things you should be aware of. 3. Keeping track of your condition by writing down a few measures from week to week. 	
You have the following disease(s) or condition(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Blood Pressure Diabetes 	
Your care of these conditions may have been made difficult because of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hospital or emergency room use possible medication problems 	
High blood pressure issues: Diabetes issues:	Things you should be aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> your blood pressure should be no higher than 150/90, even for those 70 years of age or older avoid high salt blood levels of "sugar-hemoglobin" and LDL cholesterol as near normal as possible fasting blood sugar between 80-140(US) 4.4-7.8(Canada and Europe) "converting enzyme inhibitors" may prevent kidney problems daily checking feet for cuts or sores and eye exams at least every year are very important

✓Your summary

✓Your Management Form and Diary

✓Your Action Form

✓Improve Your Health Confidence

✓Your Personal Health Plan

YOUR PHP (PERSONAL HEALTH PLAN) BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE

It has in it most of the information from your Check Up and also copies of these Tabs for you to review whenever you wish. Save it, send it, change it whenever you wish.

It's easy: Start by exploring the report. Each section has it's own Tab Button at the top.

Click the "Edit PHP" button at the bottom to start filling in information that's important to you.

It can be shared: by saving to your computer, your USB stick or storing it securely on line.

It can be used by doctors or nurses: share it and ask them to add to "Professional Comments".

It changes with you: Update your saved information at any time by choosing "Edit PHP".

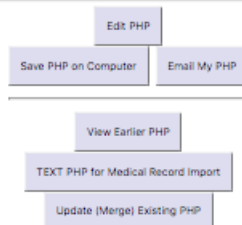
How's Your Health Personal Health Plan (PHP)



Report Created: Undated
No history

Instructions	Me and My Health Needs	Emergency and Medications	Prevention	My Health Goals	Professional Comments
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It's easy: Start by exploring the report. Each section has its own Tab Button at the top.
Click the "Edit PHP" button at the bottom to start filling in information that's important to you.
It can be shared: by saving to your computer, your USB stick or storing it securely on line.
It can be used by doctors or nurses: share it and ask them to add to "Professional Comments".
It changes with you: Update your saved information at any time by choosing "Edit PHP"



You can use the Problem Solving of HowsYourHealth as often as necessary. Problem Solving produces a single page summary for you.

Everyone Has Problems




- Problems are part of living
- Some problems are more important than others.
- Some problems are more difficult than others.

A problem may be how you manage schoolwork, work, your feelings, or pain. Not being able to manage and control problems is stressful, bad for health, and bad for how we feel.

Good Problem-Solving is useful now. Good Problem-Solving is useful in the future as new problems arise. If you want more information about problem solving, [click here](#).

These next 10 screens will help you think about a problem and how to solve it. You can go backwards and forwards at any time to change what you have written.

See What You Get  **Brief Video Guide**

Privacy...absolutely no personal information about you or your computer is stored or shared. Only you decide what to do with the information.

#10 Your Problem Solving Worksheet

Problem: Back Pains

Your Achievable Goal: Be smart about exercise

Your best current solution for achieving that goal: Three times a day do program exercises

Your best current steps to take now:

1. Use 7,11,4 as times for exercise
2. Bring mat to work

Your buddies who can help you:

1. Stephanie
2. Shoshanna

Your Own Portable Health Record

When someone is very ill and their health record is not available, the lack of reliable information increases the chances for error by other health professionals who are not aware of important problems, allergies, etc.

Your health record reflects what health professional report. When they are not on the “same page,” those reports can lead to problems. Studies show that availability of health records can improve “same page” communication.

Current health record software sold by Company A can usually not speak to the health record sold by Company B. If you change doctors, and about 50% of Americans do every 5 years, your electronic medical record does not easily move with you.

Perhaps even more risky is the fact that many Americans have more than one physician. About one in five of Americans with more than one physician say that they do not know who is in charge. Bad things can happen when no one doctor is in charge or when the information one doctor has the other does not know.

To avoid problems, why don't people have and carry their own health records?

HowsYourHealth now allows you to start your own short version health record in a nationally standard language that all health care providers should understand.

You and your doctor can easily edit and update your transportable health record. You can ask your physician or health system to add additional information such as lab tests.

You, emergency professionals, and any one else you trust can review your portable health record by using an internet browser.

What Does Your Doctor See?

You can always print out any forms from HowsYourHealth and hand deliver them to your doctor. You can always take your portable health record to your doctor.

When you use the access code your doctor gave you to enter HowsYourHealth, your doctor will see a summary of responses for her/his patients. No personally identifiable information is available.

The summary information is very helpful to your doctor to see what patient needs exist and how well these needs are being served by the practice.

If your doctor asks you to send her/him your personal information and you send the information, your Action Form and Condition Management Form are sent electronically with your name and date of birth attached. This information may be stored by your doctor in a special program that allows the office staff to identify groups of patients with problems such as those who are bothered by pain or those who require a bowel cancer test.

What Does Your Employer, School, or Community See?

The employer, school or community sponsoring HowsYourHealth will see a summary of responses. No personally identifiable information is available. The summary information is very helpful to the sponsors to see what needs exist and how well these needs are being met.