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HEALTHY CHOICES FOR MIND AND BODY

Written by Ann Gerhardt, MD

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DOCTOR #3: Act like you think he/she is smart. Give symptoms, not diagnoses. It is very frustrating for a doctor to hear, “I have the flu,” without being told what the patient actually is experiencing. Joe Patient may think ‘the flu’ is vomiting and diarrhea, but doctors think of ‘flu’ as a specific viral respiratory ailment. If the doctor doesn’t clarify your real symptoms, you might get a nasal spray instead of the rectal suppository you need.

Symptoms include things like (but not limited to) pain (you name the body part), fever, rash, weakness, burning, blurred vision, shortness of breath, cough, falling, numbness, swelling, redness (or any other change of color), constipation, nausea, hair falling out and bleeding. These are what you **feel** and experience. **DO** describe these.

A **diagnosis** is something like heart attack, influenza, cancer, gout, stroke, migraine, hepatitis, colitis, neuropathy, arthritis, asthma, malnutrition, sinus infection, psoriasis and sciatica. These **cause** what you feel.

AFTER describing the problem and listing symptoms, you offer suggestions for the diagnosis. You could say that you (or your family) have had something similar in the past and it was diagnosed as whatever. You will have an ally if you let the doctor at least **THINK** that you care about his/her assessment. You never know, maybe presenting it this way will lead to a diagnosis and treatment that keep you from getting it again.