

**Getting the Most Out Of Your Doctor:
Talk sufficiently and succinctly.**
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Doctors want to help their patients. Patients want to be helped. The business and economics of medicine these days necessitate time-constrained visits that make neither the doctors nor the patients happy. If you leave information out of the description of your problem, the doctor is handicapped when formulating a diagnosis and plan. Don't expect the doctor to read your mind or "just know." And don't feel intimidated by being rushed, so that you leave information out.

On the other hand, repeating yourself or giving a long, drawn-out description of every detail of the day you passed out, who was there, why your bathtub was slippery that day, what you were wearing, who called 911, what the EMTs asked you, how long it took to put in the IV, the ER doctor's manner, what else was going on in the ER ... uses up your time and the doctor's interest in hearing you talk even more. Instead (for example), focus on when and where it happened, symptoms before and after, what got hurt when you fell, how long you were unconscious, the ER tests done and their results and the diagnosis and treatment in the ER. Then the doctor can ask more questions as needed, make a tentative diagnosis and develop a plan, which, hopefully, you will have time to question and discuss.

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