



## **QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR GUARDIAN PCP, SPECIALIST, AND/OR CASE MANAGER**

### **Questions To Ask About Your Medication**

Taking medications isn't as simple as swallowing a pill. Medicines can only help if you take them as prescribed. Take part in decisions regarding your treatment, follow the treatment plan you and your doctor agree on, watch for problems and become actively involved in solving them with your healthcare team. By following these guidelines, you can help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke and achieve the fullest benefits from your treatment plan. Review the following questions with your healthcare team and take an active role in your health.

- What is the name of the medicine?
- Is this the brand or generic name?
- What is the medicine supposed to do?
- How and when do I take it, and for how long?
- What foods, drinks, other medicines or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?
- What are the possible side effects?
- What do I do if they occur?
- Is there any written information available about the medicine?
- What happens if I miss a dose of my medicine?
- How often will I have to get the medication refilled?
- How will I know that my medication is working?
- What are the risks of taking this medication?
- What are the risks of NOT taking this medication?
- Are there less expensive medications for my condition?

### **Questions To Ask About Diet**

Learn to read food labels so you can tell how much fat, sodium and other ingredients are in your diet. If your doctor tells you to "watch your diet" or make dietary changes, ask for specifics. Questions you can ask are:

- What kinds of foods should I eat?
- What kinds of foods should I avoid?
- Should I restrict my calories or fat intake to a certain level?
- What are some cooking tips that I should follow?

- What do I need to know about eating out?
- What can I eat at fast-food restaurants?
- Do I need to see a nutritionist or dietitian? If so, can you recommend one?
- Should I keep a diary of what I eat?
- Are there any groups in the community that can help me with my nutrition goals?
- How do I read food labels?
- How can I control the portions? How much salt may I eat?

### **Questions To Ask About Losing Weight**

- Why are weight control and regular physical activity important?
- How much weight should I lose, and how fast? What is a realistic weight goal for me?
- How often should I check my weight?
- What should my daily calorie, fat and cholesterol intake be?
- Are prescription diet pills appropriate for me?
- Do I have to exercise to lose weight? If so, what kinds of activities do you recommend?
- Once I lose the weight, how do I keep it off?
- What diet guidelines should I follow?
- What are the best types of activities for me?
- How much activity do I need to do?
- How much weight gain is too much?
- How can family and friends help?

### **Questions To Ask About Cholesterol**

- What do my cholesterol numbers mean?
- How often should I have my levels checked?
- How does physical activity affect my levels?
- What type of diet should I eat?
- Will I need cholesterol-lowering medicine?
- How long will it take to reach my cholesterol goals?

### **Questions To Ask About High Blood Pressure**

- What should my blood pressure be?
- How often should my blood pressure be checked?
- What about home blood pressure monitors?
- Should I use blood pressure machines at stores?
- How does physical activity affect my blood pressure?
- What's my daily sodium (or salt) limit?
- Will I need to take blood pressure medicine?
- Will I always have to take medicine?
- Why do I need to lose weight?

### **Questions To Ask About Physical Activity**

- Why is regular physical activity important?
- Can I exercise?
- What are the best types of activities for me?
- How much activity do I need?
- Can I have sex?

### **Questions To Ask About Quitting Cigarettes and Tobacco**

- What can I do to stop the cravings?
- How many minutes do cravings last?
- What about a nicotine patch or gum?
- Can I take a smoking cessation medication?
- After I quit, when will the urges stop?
- What if I start gaining weight?
- How can I keep from gaining weight?
- How can family and friends help?
- What if I slip and go back to tobacco?
- How long will it take to reduce my risk?

### **Questions To Ask About Heart and Stroke Health**

- What are my risk factors for heart disease?
- Am I at risk for stroke?
- What are the warning signs of heart disease and stroke?
- Do I need to lose or gain weight for my health?
- What is a healthful eating plan for me?
- What kind of physical activity is right for me?
- What is my blood pressure, and is it at a healthy level?
- What is my blood cholesterol, and is it at a healthy level?
- What can I do to lower my risk of heart disease and stroke? (If you smoke, ask for help in quitting.)