



## BUILDING A STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

Here are tips to help you build a strong partnership with your health care professional. Read these tips to help you prepare for your next visit.

### LISTENING AND LEARNING

- **Check to make sure you understand.** First, listen to your health professional. Then, use your own words to describe what he or she said.
- **Ask for a clear explanation.** It's okay to ask your provider to explain things you don't understand.
- **Ask questions about your health problem and treatment.** Try to write down your questions before your visit. This can help you remember what you want to ask.
- **Teach-back.** Review each step of your treatment plan to make sure you understand what you need to do.

### EDUCATING YOUR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT YOU

- **Tell your provider about yourself.** Let him or her know about the kind of person you are. This will help your provider know you better, work with you to solve your health problems and make treatment decisions that are right for you.
- **Tell your provider what you think about your problem.** Describe the problem, and what seems to make it better or worse. This can help your provider know what information you need and correct any misunderstandings you may have. It also can help your provider create the best treatment plan for you.
- **Ask if you are being understood.** It's okay to ask your provider if he or she understands what you are saying.

### ASSESSING WHAT MAKES IT HARD FOR YOU TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- **Talk about what makes it hard for you to take care of yourself.** Let your provider know what parts of your treatment plan may be hard for you to do, such as taking your medicine each day or changing the way you eat.
- **Problem-solve.** Break up your treatment plan into small steps. This can help you figure out how to solve those things that are hard for you.
- **Check to make sure you understand your provider's instructions.** You can repeat what you heard and ask if that is correct.
- **Ask about taking your medicines the right way.** Knowing more about your medicines, their benefits and possible side effects, helps you stay on track with your treatment plan. Also, find out why you need to make changes in your lifestyle. Understanding how these changes can benefit you, may make it easier to make the changes and improve your health.

## PARTNERING

- **Set goals for the visit.** Tell your provider what you want to talk about during the visit. This helps make the most of your time together.
- **Decide what is most important.** Make a list of your problems and concerns. Put the most important things at the top of the list.
- **Talk about new and different ways to take care of your health.** Together, you and your provider may come up with ideas you hadn't thought of before.
- **Be an active partner in the decision-making process.** Talk with your provider about your treatment, any possible side effects, and costs. Also, talk about how you see the treatment plan fitting in with the way you live.

## SUPPORTING AND BUILDING RAPPORT

- **Be open about your concerns.** You may feel fearful or uncertain about your condition and treatment. This is normal. Let your provider know about your fears. Ask for more information about your condition. This can help you separate your fears from the facts.
- **Work well with your provider.** Discuss the best ways for you and your provider to work together.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT VISIT

Topics I want to cover: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Questions I will ask: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We hope that Time to Talk CARDIO helps you build a strong partnership with your health care professional. We have a large library of videos to help you communicate effectively about your heart health with your health care team. Please visit our Web site at [www.timetotalkcardio.com](http://www.timetotalkcardio.com).

We look forward to your return visit!

Time to Talk CARDIO is an educational program underwritten by Merck & Co., Inc. and developed in partnership with the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, Canyon Ranch Institute and RIASWorks.

