Doing Your Part to Care for Your Health

What is self care?
Self care is something you do every day. It is what you do for yourself and your family to stay physically and emotionally healthy. Self care includes things like brushing your teeth, wearing a bike helmet, taking prescribed medicines, and working with your doctor.

Self care leads to:
- Better quality life
- Improved health
- Increased life expectancy
- Less doctor visits
- Higher patient satisfaction

What can I do to care for myself?
- Follow a healthy lifestyle
- Be active in your own health care
- Work with your health care provider
- Take medicines as prescribed
- Seek out health information

How can I make the most of my doctor visit?
- Come prepared-make a list of all concerns
- Take information with you, such as your medication list
- Consider bringing a family member or friend
- Get an interpreter if you know you will need one
- Be honest
- Understand your medications
- Discuss ways to keep healthy or manage your illness
- Discuss changes since your last visit

What should I know about my medications?
It is important you understand your medications. Keep a list of your medications with you. List each medicine, what it is for, when you take it, and how much you take. You may also want to ask your doctor the following questions about your medications:
- What does this medicine do?
- Why am I taking it?
- How and when should I take it?
What are the side effects?
What should I do if I get any of these side effects?
How does this mix with other medicines, herbs, or food/drink that I take?
How long will I need to use this medicine?
Is there anything that can help remind me to take my medicines?

Where can I find medical and health information

Looking for medical information can be confusing. However, computers are making it easier
to find the health information you want. Other resources, such as journal articles, health
libraries, and health care organizations can also be helpful. Don't believe everything you read.
Get recommendations of good web sites from your health care provider or another health
professional. The following resources are where you can find health information.

- Community libraries
- University, hospital, and health libraries
- Federal Government Clearinghouses
- Voluntary organizations
- Your health care provider
- Nurse, pharmacist, dietitian, social worker, health
  educator, or other health professional
- Computer databases
- The Internet
- MHealthy Health Education Resource Center (HERC)
  www.mhealthy.umich.edu/herc

Internet resources:

- National Library of Medicine
  www.nlm.nih.gov
- National Institutes of Health
  www.nih.gov
- Healthfinder
  www.healthfinder.gov
- Clinical trials
  www.clinicaltrials.gov
- Medline Plus
  www.medlineplus.gov