



#1 Free Legal Website

FindLaw.com is the leading and largest online resource for legal information. For basic legal issues to more complex ones, you'll find thousands of helpful articles, a legal community to get answers to your specific questions, an attorney directory, blogs, news, DIY forms, and much more.

Tips on How to Be a Good Patient

Being a good patient means more than just sticking your tongue out and saying "ah." As a patient, you should have an active interest in your care and treatment, and you should also work to understand and protect your rights. Here are some tips in getting an "A" for being a good patient.

Understand Your Rights

- You have the right to "fire" your physicians. If you do not like the way your physicians treat you, if you do not trust them, or if you do not believe they are providing you with the best possible care, you can leave.

- You have the right to take an active interest in your care and treatment. Ask any question of your physician that you feel is important to you. Do not get hung up on the idea that it is a "stupid" question. If you are curious about it, then you have the right to ask and receive an honest answer.

- You have the right to be told about alternative courses of treatment, even if your health insurance may not cover them or you may not be able to afford them. If you find that your physician is saying things like "well, there is another option, but you probably can't afford it," put an end to the practice by stating clearly and plainly that you are aware of your right to be told of all possible options whether or not you may be able to pay for them.

- You have the right to refuse consent for any procedure or treatment. If you refuse consent, you may be asked to read and sign a form indicating that refusal.

- You have the right to leave the hospital or care facility against medical advice. You will be likely have to sign a waiver form indicating that you are doing so on your own free will and against the recommendations of your medical providers.

- You have the right, if you are asked to participate in a medical or drug trial, to ask specific questions regarding the purpose of the trial, the potential risks of the trial, the benefits which you may receive, payments to which you may be entitled, and measures taken to protect your privacy.

- You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect in all matters related to your health.

Act Responsibly and With Your Interests In Mind

- Become knowledgeable about your own health and any conditions or diseases that you may have. The more you know about your health, the harder it will be for anyone (like an insurance company) to pull the wool over your eyes by telling you that a treatment or medication is inappropriate or unwarranted. The smarter you are about your health, the more powerful you become.

- Keep careful records of your medical health. Start a diary that includes information on your general health status and the reactions that you have to any medications prescribed by your physician during the course of an illness. If you have a written record, it will be much easier for you to remember and explain your concerns to your physician at your next meeting.

Example: A diary entry could state something like, "On Monday June 4, after getting home from the hospital, I took the first dosage of the antibiotic and was up with insomnia all night. The same thing happened the next three days in a row. Is this normal? Is it related to the antibiotic?"

You can also use this same idea to make a written list of questions that you have for any regular checkup or physicians' visit.

Example: A list could contain both specific questions, such as "Is my blood pressure higher or lower than my last visit," to the more abstract such as "What can I do to lower my blood pressure?"

•

If you have seen other physicians or specialists since last seeing your physician, do not assume that he or she knows all about your other treatments. Bring a list of any other physicians or medical providers you have seen. If you have reports, charts, x-rays, or test results from those other providers, bring them with you.

•

Bring a pad of paper and pen with you to any visit with your physician. Many patients have "selective memories" when it comes to medical care, and they may only remember the good things about their visit. Write down a summary of everything your physician tells you as he or she is telling it to you. That way, you can review your notes later to refresh your memory about all aspects of your medical health.

•

If physicians make you anxious or nervous, consider bringing your spouse, sibling, mature child, or good friend with you to your appointment. Make sure your companion is someone you trust and with whom you can share your feelings or worries, particularly if you are afraid that you may receive bad news. Having a hand to squeeze or a hug at the ready in those hard times may go a long way toward making you feel better emotionally, if not physically.

•

Take good care of yourself. Follow the advice and recommendations of your physician. Your well-being or your very life could depend upon it.

FINDLAW.COM EMPOWERS PEOPLE WITH TRUSTED, TIMELY AND INTELLIGENT LEGAL INFORMATION

BLOGS – FindLaw Blogs present timely news that has real-life implications, deliver important information and discuss law-related entertainment.

FINDLAW ANSWERS – A vibrant, interactive online community where everyday people can ask legal questions and get real-time answers from legal professionals and others with similar experiences.

NEWS & NEWSLETTERS – Updated throughout the day and night and covering a wide range of legal topics, FindLaw.com's News page presents current legal news, keeping people informed and educated.

FIND A LAWYER – An easy-to-search database of more than one million lawyers and law firms. It provides detailed information, enabling people to contact a qualified lawyer when they are ready.



DO-IT-YOURSELF FORMS & CONTRACTS – FindLaw.com provides accurate legal documents for common legal matters. Choose from a library of easy-to-use, low-cost, accurate legal forms for everyday legal issues.

FINDLAW VIDEO – On FindLaw.com, you'll find an online directory of more than 1,500 short videos dedicated exclusively to legal topics and attorney and law firm profiles.

Connect With Us

FindLaw.com has an entire social media team dedicated to providing our users with as many options as possible to join, participate in, and learn from the FindLaw community. Some of the social key channels are the following:



[FindLaw for Consumers on Facebook](#)

Making the law easy to access with interactive legal updates aimed at starting conversations, informing followers of their legal rights and providing a forum for questions and resources



[@FindLawConsumer on Twitter](#)

Tweeting interesting, entertaining and informative legal news everyday

HAVE A LEGAL QUESTION?
NEED TO FIND AN AFFORDABLE,
QUALIFIED ATTORNEY?

Protect yourself, your family or
your business with a legal plan
or form from LegalStreet

www.LEGALSTREET.com

Copyright © 2013 FindLaw, a Thomson Reuters business. All rights reserved. The information contained in this article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The use and distribution of this article is subject to the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license, which can be viewed at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. You must attribute the article by providing the title of the article, FindLaw copyright notice and link to the original work. You may not use the article for commercial purposes and you may not alter or transform this article in any way.

FindLaw[®]
A Thomson Reuters Business