Managing Your Health

• Your Health, Your Responsibility

• Be Prepared For Your Next Office Visit
Your Health, Your Responsibility.

Your lifestyle
Remember the basics of good health. Eat wisely, exercise regularly, don’t smoke, manage stress, drink alcohol in moderation or not at all, and get preventive screenings and immunizations. You’ll lower your risk of chronic disease (e.g., heart disease, cancer, diabetes) and be able to manage your weight and chronic conditions, such as arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes and asthma.

Medical management
Manage any chronic condition conscientiously. Stick to the treatment and medication plans you and your doctor have developed together. Report small problems and side effects to your doctor before they become bigger issues.

Costs
Spend your health care dollars wisely, just as you do for other personal expenses. If you question a recommended treatment or test, seek more information or a second opinion. Request generic drugs when appropriate.

Information
Learn to recognize when common problems can be treated at home and when medical care is needed. Armed with the facts, you will be able to make medical care decisions with skill and confidence.

Communication
Establish a positive working relationship with your health care providers. Ask questions about the need for, and effectiveness of, recommended tests, treatments and medications.

Records
Keep your own complete, up-to-date medical records. Include your family history, past treatments, surgeries, hospitalizations, current medications, dietary supplements and allergies. Share this information with your health care providers.

How can you stay healthy, get the best possible health care, and get the most for your health care dollars?

Should you go to the doctor’s office as soon as you have a problem? Let your doctor make all the decisions? Let your insurance company worry about costs? In truth, the best way to stay healthy and receive the finest health care is to take responsibility for your own health and health care.
Be Prepared for Your Next Office Visit.

To get the most out of a visit with your doctor, it’s important to share as much information as you can about your reasons for coming. Before each appointment, write down the answers to the following questions:

What is your health concern?
Be specific. List your symptoms, for example: “I have had stomach cramps and diarrhea.”

When did your symptoms begin?
Try to be exact. If you cannot pinpoint the exact date and time a symptom appeared, try to remember generally about when you began to notice it.

Learn your family history.
Is there a history of such diseases as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and prostate or breast cancer in your immediate family: parents, grandparents, brothers or sisters?

What have you done to try to relieve your symptoms?
Have you used any medications? What kind? What happened?

Have you had this problem before?
When? What happened?

What seems to make the symptoms worse?
List activities, medications, foods or other things that make you feel worse.

Are you allergic to any medications?
If yes, what are they?