

How to Prepare For a Doctor's Appointment

Discussing an eating disorder with a doctor can be overwhelming. The following tips will help you prepare for a doctor's appointment and make sure you're ready to provide medical staff with all relevant information and advocate for your treatment needs:



- **Write down all the symptoms** you or your loved one is experiencing, including all eating disorder symptoms as well as any health and mental health concerns. You can print out this checklist of symptoms to bring to the doctor: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EDSignsSymptomsChecklist.pdf>. To see a full list of all the eating disorders and their symptoms visit: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/warning-signs-and-symptoms/>.
- **Make a list of all the questions you'd like to ask during the appointment** and organize them in order of importance. For example, "Can you provide a referral to an eating disorder specialist in the area?," "What kind of experience do you have treating patients with eating disorders?," "If [my/my loved one's] symptoms worsen before our next appointment should [I/we] go to the ER?"
- **Print out educational materials** to take to the doctor to educate them about eating disorders. You can download and print flyers we have created here: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/shareable-resources/>. You can also share these guidelines from the Academy for Eating Disorders and the American Psychiatric Association on the standards of care for eating disorders: <https://www.aedweb.org/resources/publications/medical-care-standards> <https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/book/10.1176/appi.books.9780890424865>
- **Seek permission to accompany your child** to the appointment if they are over the age of 18. If they are okay with you joining them, ask how you can best support them during the appointment.
- **Trust your instincts** when deciding whether to discuss your concerns privately with the doctor or in front of your child if they are a minor. If you decide to talk with the doctor while your child is present, it may be helpful to let them know ahead of time what you'll be discussing. Whatever you decide, it's important to let the doctor know about all of your concerns and the symptoms they are experiencing.