

# Tips for Communicating with a Veteran's Health Care Team



You are a key member of the Veteran's care team, and maintaining effective communication with other team members is an important aspect of providing the Veteran you care for with the best care possible. Try the tips below to help make the most of doctor visits and to promote regular, open communication with the medical personnel on the Veteran's clinical care team.

- Before you go to the doctor, write questions down so you won't forget them. Work with the Veteran you care for to come up with the questions you both need to know. See our [list of suggested questions](#).
- Be clear about what you want to say to the doctor. Try not to ramble.
- If you have lots of things to talk about, make a consultation appointment, so the doctor can allow enough time to meet with you in an unhurried way.
- Educate yourself about your loved one's disease or disability. With all the information on the Internet, it is easier than ever before. Be sure to check the information you find with the Veteran's clinical care team.
- Learn the routine at your doctor's office and/or the medical center so you can make the system work for you, not against you.
- Recognize that not all questions have answers – especially those beginning with why.
- Separate your anger and frustration about not being able to help your loved one as much as you would like to from your feelings about the health care team. Remember, you are both on the same side.
- Appreciate what the health care team is doing to help and say thank you from time to time.

Adapted, with permission, from the National Family Caregiver Association resource "Improving Doctor/Caregiver Communications."

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