

Checklist: When Communication Becomes the Problem

Before the Appointment

- Write down what you need: symptoms, timeline, what's improved, what's worsened
- Bring supporting documents: logs, test results, symptom charts
- Decide what outcome you're hoping for (clarity, next steps, referrals)

During the Appointment

- Lead with the main concern, not your whole story
- Reference your documents briefly and hand them over if needed
- Stay steady—if you're dismissed, rephrase once with clarity
- If still ignored, ask: "Can you help me understand what you're seeing that doesn't match what I'm describing?"
- Note the provider's response tone, not just their words

After the Appointment

- Write down what was said and what was not addressed
- If misrepresented in the notes, request a correction via patient portal or follow-up
- Decide if this provider is workable or if it's time to find someone else
- Save all communications for your personal health record

If You Feel Shut Down or Blamed

- Pause and breathe—don't absorb their reaction as your fault
- Say: "I'm just trying to understand my body. I'm not here to argue."
- If necessary: "I've lived in this body every day. I'm asking you to work with me, not against me."