



Kids As Self Advocates

## Contract with your Doctor

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by [Maia Wroblewski](#)

*Maia, a senior in high school, has a lot of experience with doctors and hospitals. As a result, she has developed a unique agreement with her health care provider, a contract! In this fact sheet, she shares her advice for creating one with your doctor.*

### WHY DO YOU WANT A CONTRACT

A person might not think that a contract with a doctor is necessary, but it can come in handy. As a person with an illness I can become sick very suddenly. I find myself constantly seeing doctors, and going through procedures that many people do not.

During one unfortunate time, I became sick after the procedure, and had to be hospitalized. I was sick, tired, and did not want to be talking to a bunch of doctors who wanted to know everything. After a night of fluids I felt better, I was hungry, and I wanted to eat, but the doctors felt this was not a good idea. They were not my normal doctor so they did not know that denying me food was also a problem. So because I could not eat my condition became worse. I was hospitalized for three days, and it was something that could have been avoided, if the doctors had listened to me.

I decided that I was not going to let something like this happen again. I have a very good relationship with my doctors, and I did not want my health, and our different perspectives to ruin that. So, my doctor and I have an agreement. This agreement works for both of us, and allows some room for discussion. I would suggest a working agreement, or contract to anyone who would like to have an understanding with their doctor, or feels that they are not being listened to.

### HOW TO MAKE A CONTRACT

In the first steps of making a contract the patient, and the doctor need to arrange for some time to talk. Things that should be addressed during this time are:

- the rules that you will follow;
- things you will agree to do, or not do, as well as the doctor; and
- other specifics that apply to you.

The meeting will also allow you and your doctor to talk about how you feel, and to gain an understanding of your needs

Once you have this meeting, then the contract must be written up. I would suggest that the patient be the one to write up this contract, because it gives them the control. The contract should be fair, and include everything that you and your doctors have talked about. Then, the doctor and patient must sign the contract to make it clear that both of you agree.

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One thing that I have found helpful, is a **bio sheet**. When you are sick, or don't feel like talking to doctor after doctor, a bio sheet is handy. The bio sheet can include your medical background, along with an up-to-date medication list, and past problems. This eliminates the same old questions doctors always ask. You can keep this information, along with the contract in a folder, and you should be the one to hold on to it. That way you always have it.

#### **A REMINDER**

A contract is something that both you and your doctor should follow, but patients do have to remember that doctors are more informed in the medical profession than we are. That is why they are doctors, and so if it turns out that he needs to break your contract for medical reasons, the doctor should be allowed to. The contract is only there to make sure that both you, and your doctor communicate, and understand each other.

#### **A WORKING CONTRACT**

Contracts come in handy when you are sick, and don't feel like talking to doctors, or when you want to make sure that a doctor is completely informed before making a decision to do something. Working contracts are a very useful thing.

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