



Keeping Track of Your Health Care Information

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Keeping track of your health care information can be difficult. It can be tough to figure out a system that works for you. Here are some tips on keeping track of your health care information.

Step 1: Gather your information. The first step is to gather all of your health care information together. If you are just starting to manage your own health care information, you may need to ask a parent or guardian to give you any papers that they have about your health care. Information can include doctor records, bills, and health insurance information.

Step 2: Sort your information into piles. Sorting all of this information can seem overwhelming. Start by making a few different piles. For example, make an insurance pile and a doctor's office pile. Put all of your papers into those two piles. Once you have done that, break those two piles into more piles. For example, you could break those piles into prescription medications, disability information, and insurance benefits information. Keep breaking down your piles until you get the following piles:

- Insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare benefits coverage information;
- Insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare Explanation of Benefits;
- Prescription drug coverage information;
- Doctor's office bills;
- Doctor's office receipts;
- Information about prescription medications that you are taking;
- Information about your disability; and
- Any other health care information that you have.

These are some ideas for piles, but you might come up with ideas that work better for you.

Step 3: Get folders. Put the information that you have sorted into folders. File folders work well for this. Label the folders so that you know what is inside. For example, one folder will be labeled "Doctor's office bills," and another folder will be labeled "Information about my disability."

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Step 5: Read all of your health care information. It is important that you understand your own health care information, but reading it is hard. Start by reading the information in one of your folders. Write down any questions as you read. It is okay if it takes you a long time to read all of your information. Be proud of yourself for starting to read your health care information.

Step 6: Ask for help. Understanding health care information is hard. It is fine to ask for help! Look at your notes that you took while you were reading your health care information. Decide who you need to ask to get your questions answered. If you had a question while looking at a doctor's bill, you may need to call the doctor's office. If you had a question while reading your insurance policy, you may need to call the insurance company. You might want to ask a parent or guardian to help you sort out your questions and figure out how to get the answers. Talking to different people to get answers to your questions may be scary or frustrating. Don't give up! Make sure to get the person's name or ID number (sometimes at health insurance companies the people you talk to may have an employee ID number). Write down the answers to your questions and who told you the answers. This can be important in the future to show other people why you made decisions based on the answers you received from certain people, their employees. Getting answers to your questions and who told you the answers is called "documentation." Documentation is an important thing to learn how to do to advocate for yourself.

Step 7: Add information to the folder. When you get new health care information, read it and write down any questions. Ask all of your questions until you get them answered. Write down the answers to your questions. Then you can add the new health care information to your folders.

Resources

See "Surviving a Doctor's Appointment," and "Tips for Preparing for a Doctor's Appointment," and "Your Rights at the Doctor's Office," all written and produced for KASA and found on our website, www.fvkasa.org, or upon request from the address below.

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