



# Annual Visit Guide

Thankfully, there is nothing special you need to do to prepare for your annual physical. Of course, if your office sends a reminder with instructions, please follow their instructions accordingly.

A lot can change in a year. This visit is meant to assess your overall health, update your vaccinations, provide any guidance on screenings or counseling, and continue to establish a relationship with your doctor.

## Review Your Puzzle Pieces

Now is the time to take out your version of the My Health Picture worksheet and review all the components of your health. Has anything changed? Are there areas of your health that you want to talk about? Are there areas of our life that you have concerns about? Do you have health goals you want to accomplish?

- **Medical records don't automatically update:** For example, if you got a vaccine at a free clinic, it doesn't automatically notify your doctor. If you visited a holistic provider or a doctor out of state, make sure to note what occurred. Don't assume that all events related to your health or in a healthcare facility have made their way to your doctor's desk.
- **Any major life changes?** Social changes can impact your physical health. This year, did a loved one die? Did you get in a car accident? Did you start a new, stressful job? Make a note of these and mention them at your visit.

## What will happen during the visit?

You will likely be asked to fill in a large intake form reviewing all aspects of your health. When your doctor comes in, they will review all the questions on the intake form to learn more about your health history. They will also ask questions about things that may be embarrassing to fill out on a form but are important to talk about like eating disorders, STDs, sexual history.

# How can you make your visit successful?

The most effective appointments occur when patients have knowledge of their medical problems and the medications they take and are prepared with a list of things that they want to talk about.

## **Suggestions for what to talk about and what to ask:**

- What screenings and vaccinations do I need?
- Am I at risk for any medical conditions?
- Do any changes need to be made to my medications?
- Do I need to see a specialist for anything?
- What can I do to prevent health problems?
- Where is a reliable source to find health information?
- When should I follow up?

**This may not be a one stop shop.** Be prepared for your doctor to recommend follow-up treatments or tests. These tests may need to be done on a different day. Do you have concerns, requests or are you confused about the next steps? Review the “**Questions to Ask**” worksheet to fully engage in your next steps conversation.