

Six Tips for Talking to your Doctor about Medication

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In my last blog, I addressed the factors psychiatrists consider in choosing a given psychiatric medication for a patient. I emphasized the importance of medication selection being a collaborative process between the physician and the patient. In the midst of an appointment with a psychiatrist, though, it can be difficult for a patient to know what to ask, and when and how to ask it. This article includes tips for patients to help them work with their physicians in finding the best medications.

1. Ask the psychiatrist, "How did you pick that medicine?" Even if you can think of nothing else to ask during an appointment, this single question will probably lead to a wealth of useful information. For example, it might lead to a discussion of the target symptoms, how the medication affects other medications or medical conditions, and side effects.
2. Make a list of medication questions to ask your psychiatrist at your next appointment. I find it extremely useful when my patients come in with a list of questions they have made since I last saw them in my office. This way, patients are sure not to forget to ask anything important to them.
3. Take notes during your appointments. It can be difficult to remember everything your psychiatrist says during your appointment, and so bringing a note pad and pen along to take notes can be useful so that later you can remember what was discussed.
4. Read books. There are a number of excellent books available for patients on psychiatric medications. In my experience, patients find especially useful the book *Instant Psychopharmacology* by Ronald Diamond, M.D.
5. Visit websites. Patients should be careful about which websites they visit, as not all are reliable sources of medication information.

Source:

<http://apahealthyminds.blogspot.com/2011/01/six-tips-for-talking-to-your-doctor.html>

Resources:

A Consumer's Guide to Psychiatric Drugs: Straight Talk for Patients and Their Families, by John D. Preston