

Patient Self-advocacy Tip Sheet

By Oriel Ross McKinney

Self advocacy is sharing your needs and challenges with the expectation of support, accurate information, and consideration.

GET ORGANIZED

- Get a large 3 ring binder. Add section dividers to include: medical history, prescriptions & non-prescription medicine (include dosages), a section for each specialist you visit routinely, billing, and advanced directives.

YOUR MEDICAL HISTORY

- Ask family members about your family's medical history. Write down maternal and paternal information.
- Keep your own records. Always ask for a copy of all lab reports, operative reports, and doctors notes

KNOW YOUR NEEDS

- Write your symptoms down including frequency
- Decide how best you like information communicated to you
- Prevent unwelcome family intervention
- Understand your own social, emotional, and financial needs

YOUR SELF CARE

- Commit to daily physical activity
- Eat balanced meals Consult a nutritionist, as needed.

ASK QUESTIONS

- Write your questions down before & during each visit.
- Be honest with yourself and your doctors
- Don't leave doctor visits until you understand all instructions. If the doctor is short on time, ask if a nurse or competent medical staff member can assist you

HOW TO SAY NO

- Express your concerns about your diagnosis or treatment plan. Share why and open the discussion.
- Understand some patient requests are unreasonable; be open to dialogue and mutual understanding.
- Respectfully seek a second opinion, if needed

THANK YOUR TEAM

- Thank your doctors, nurses, and medical staff when they have been helpful and collaborative. Understand they work in a challenging environment and may be overloaded themselves.

This form does not replace medical expertise or account for your individual medical history. Please consult your doctor.



Oriel McKinney is the titleholder of the Majestic International Pageant (Ms.) 2021-2022. One of her platforms is advocacy for improvement in maternal health. For more information, contact her at www.orielross.com.