

STEP 2: Read and review the USPTF document ‘Stay healthy at any age’ for women or men, available on the web at <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/ppipix.htm>. Fill in any questions or comments from that document here. For example, if you need a mammogram according to the handout, list ‘mammogram needed’, etc.:

STEP 3: Review of symptoms by body system: circle any of the provided list of symptoms you are experiencing now or have experienced in the last few months. It is a good idea to review such symptom lists before your doctor visits to prepare for the visit.

GENERAL: weight gain/loss; loss of appetite; fever, chills; fatigue; night sweats

SKIN: rashes, skin discolorations

HEAD, EYES, EARS, NOSE, THROAT: headaches, dizziness, masses, seizures, visual changes, visual field defects; ringing in ears, vertigo, dizziness, hearing loss; nose bleeds, discharge, sinus disease, nasal allergies; dental disease, tooth pain, hoarseness, throat pain

RESPIRATORY: cough, shortness of breath, sputum/color; night cough; wheezing

CIRCULATORY: chest pain, needing pillows to keep head elevated to breathe at night, waking up abruptly short of breath, stopping breathing at night, short of breath when doing exercise, chest pain when doing exercise, leg or buttock pain when walking, leg swelling, palpitations or feeling abnormal heart beats.

GASTROINTESTINAL: problems swallowing, pain or soreness in stomach or abdomen, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, constipation, throwing up blood, seeing blood or blackness in the stool or ‘caca’

GENITAL / URINARY: burning or pain with urination, going to the restroom frequently, trouble with urine stream, seeing blood or cloudiness in urine, discharge from penis or vagina, any problems with sex

GYNECOLOGY: how many previous pregnancies, any problems with pregnancies, infertility, abortions, prematurity, last menstrual period, abnormally long or short menstrual cycles, age when you had first period _____ yrs; age when periods stopped _____; pelvic pain; pain with intercourse; questions about preventing pregnancy; pain with menstrual cycles that is abnormally severe; problems or masses in breasts

ENDOCRINE: fatigue; swelling; going to restroom more frequently; thirsty more than is normal; skin is too dry; hair falls out; hard to tolerate either the heat or the cold

MUSCULOSKELETAL: joint pain / swelling; arthritis; muscle or bone pain; joint swelling; gout

SKIN/LYMPHATICS: easy bruising; boils; rashes; moles; warts; swollen lymph nodes; psoriasis

NEUROLOGICAL: weakness; seizures, tremors; memory

loss or changes; numbness, tingling; pain radiating down the arm or leg; dizziness; sleep loss

PSYCHIATRIC / PSYCHOLOGICAL: depression, anxiety, psychosis, nervous break downs; substance use; feeling out of control; abnormal amount of stress; feel unsafe where I live; feel I have nowhere to turn.

STEP 4: List your past medical problems and diagnoses, or circle any from the list provided, including any pregnancies – as well as when they occurred:

Diabetes; high blood pressure; heart disease; heart attack; stroke; cancer (type: _____); high cholesterol; hypothyroidism; arthritis; back pain; obesity; depression; schizophrenia; nasal allergies; asthma; COPD; heart murmur; erectile dysfunction; gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD); sleep apnea; congestive heart failure; insomnia; Alzheimers; dementia; neuropathy; fibromyalgia; migraines; diverticulitis. _____

STEP 5: List any surgeries you have ever had, or circle any from the list provided:

Gallbladder removed; appendix removed; heart bypass surgery; C-section; knee surgery; shoulder surgery; hernia repair; hip replacement; tubes tied; hysterectomy; if hysterectomy, did they leave ovaries in?; skin cancer removed; cataracts; broken bones repaired in surgery; _____

STEP 6: List allergies or reactions to foods or medications, if you have ever had any: _____

STEP 7: List your medications and herbal products or vitamins that you take regularly or occasionally: _____

STEP 8: List if you use tobacco, are exposed to second hand smoke, use alcohol, or use illegal drugs; be as specific as you can, including how much / how often, etc.: _____

STEP 9: Non-medical health considerations: A person’s overall health depends on being at one’s best. Here is a checklist that covers many things affecting your health, but not dealing strictly with medicine: financial fitness (do you 6 months living expenses in savings ready at all times? Do you have an appropriate budget? Do you have life insurance and disability insurance? Do you have a retirement plan?); spiritual fitness (Do you regularly reflect on your most precious values, and constantly ensure your actions protect and reflect them?); family fitness (Are you making sure you provide for those closest to you adequately – with time, attention, resources?); physical fitness (Do you eat a healthy diet? Do you exercise?) social fitness (do you vote, volunteer, stay informed about current events, and give charitably?); security fitness (Do you have a plan for disasters, such as pandemic flu, bioterrorism, hazardous spills, or hurricanes?). Based on this information, I need to look into: _____

(Circle the questions above you need to address, then make a plan for needed personal changes. *Take charge.*)

STEP 10: Immunizations: Based on the ‘Stay healthy at any age’ handout, list any immunizations that are recommended for your age group, but you have not had yet: _____

STEP 11: Occupation: Please describe your occupation: _____

STEP 12: Family history: Modern medicine includes genetic considerations, based on the fact that some illnesses run in families. List information on any family members who have the following: any type of cancer, such as colon, endometrial, breast, prostate, ovarian, thyroid; diabetes; heart attack; stroke; heart disease; high blood pressure; high cholesterol; mental illness. _____

STEP 13: Primary care: Everyone needs a primary care physician. Please make plans to select one if you do not; you may call 361-884-5442 Nueces County Medical Society for suggestions if you do not know a physician. If you have one, but have not gone recently, please make sure you have regular scheduled appointments.

STEP 14: (For patients being helped by a nurse or other healthcare worker or volunteer) Nurse or volunteer, please help patient summarize findings and fill out the document. Please assess the overall status of the patient’s responses, and direct any urgent matters to the attention of the appropriate resources.

STEP 15: Summarize: The information you have gathered above, along with the ‘Stay healthy at any age’ handout from the USPTF, is a valuable asset. Keep it in a safe place.

You now have a basic roadmap for approaching your general healthcare, and you can discuss it with your doctor and other healthcare providers. To be the best patient you can be, here are some final tips: Keep your own medical records at home in a notebook. Ask for copies of your tests and records so your doctors can review them if they need to upon request. Keep track of your medical history in your notebook, as well as any medications you are taking, and your allergies to medications. Keep track of any questions you have for the doctor, so that you can read from your list of questions during the visit. **Take charge, and be prepared.**

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HEALTHCARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND HEALTHCARE NAVIGATION GUIDE FOR ADULTS

As an adult, you are the President and CEO of your own personal health – plain and simple. Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals are not the directors, but rather are consultants that work for you. You are the boss; but whether or not you act out your role is up to you. This handout is designed as a ‘briefing’ tool for you to help in this process of taking charge of your healthcare.

The modern practice of medicine, as well as the healthcare delivery system, is based not just on taking care of illness or injury; rather, it involves staying healthy and actively preventing illness. The best time to seek healthcare is not when you are ill or injured, but when you are still healthy. Everyone needs a primary care healthcare provider, so that a personalized healthcare plan can be devised. In kids, such preventive care includes ensuring proper immunizations, looking out for problems such as asthma or ADHD, and educating about dangers such as head injuries or drowning. For adults, prevention can be life-saving, as well – mammograms catch cancers early; in some cases, a \$4/month pill could add decades to one’s life by helping prevent heart attack or stroke due to high blood pressure. Please take time to obtain primary healthcare and preventive services for your family. See below for some good resources to help you in this endeavor.

One way to understand the ‘big picture’ of modern healthcare is this:

ACUTE CARE +
PRIMARY PREVENTION +
SECONDARY PREVENTION +
TERTIARY PREVENTION.

ACUTE CARE is when you feel sick or are injured, and this causes you to come in for medical attention.

PRIMARY PREVENTION is preventive testing when you have no illness or symptoms. Examples: mammograms, PAP smears, and cancer screenings.

SECONDARY PREVENTION is routine testing, medications, and medical care for your ongoing, chronic diagnoses. Examples: for a diabetic, getting blood work every 3 to 6 months; getting foot exams every 3 to 6 months; routinely checking blood sugar; and following a diabetic diet.

TERTIARY PREVENTION is preventing more medical problems for developing after some problems already have. Example: in a man who has already had a heart attack, taking medications and following a cardiac diet in order to prevent a second heart attack.

Your primary care doctor might use all four of these strategies to craft your individualized treatment plan. Starting with the medical history, then the physical exam, tests, and other data-gathering, (s)he will make a list of problems and diagnoses that you have. Modern medicine includes evidence-based guidelines that ensure each diagnosis and prevention category has a schedule of recommended management routines (tests, medications, procedures, exam intervals, etc.). As you can imagine, this produces a very complex array of things to manage on each patient; and given the limits of the current healthcare delivery system, it means a doctor is unlikely to be able to manage all points for all patients in her/his care. Therefore, you as the patient, can play a key role in helping to manage this information. If you don't, you are only putting yourself at the risk that something might get missed. Computers and electronic health records show promise in helping patients and doctors in this process, but so far, there is not a universal standard for this process. So, what can you do? **Take charge.** Do what you can to keep track of this information, and stay informed.

The internet, computers, and healthcare: The information revolution ushered in by widespread use of the internet has been a game-changer for medicine and healthcare. Patients can educate themselves nowadays on most preventive care needs and disease diagnoses, better enabling them to take care of themselves, and becoming more educated partners of their physicians in a team effort to manage their conditions. The key is finding the right information – information that is authoritative and reliable. Here are a number of resources I personally recommend:
<http://epss.ahrq.gov/ePSS> - a general preventive health resource based on age and gender, giving very specific pre-

ventive care recommendations; excellent resource.

Others: www.familydoctor.org, <http://medlineplus.gov>, www.emedicine.com, www.uptodate.com/patients/index.html, <http://www.mypyramid.gov>, <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/ppipix.htm> (see men and women 'Stay Healthy at Any Age').

The US is experiencing a healthcare crisis. Millions of citizens lack health insurance, and healthcare costs are crippling the national economy at large, as well as the personal finances of untold millions of families. Because of this, doctors and hospitals are accustomed to dealing with patients lacking sufficient insurance resources to pay for healthcare costs. While the whole system needs to be overhauled, in the meantime there are a number of ways ordinary individuals and families can still get the care they need, despite the lack of enough health coverage. **Take charge.**

Deal-making and payment plans: Most doctors' offices and hospitals are accustomed to dealing with a percentage of their patients not having health insurance. They usually will offer some kind of discount for cash-paying patients, and allow a down payment with low monthly payments until the balance is paid. The patient should shop around and be savvy, and certainly not give up.

Insure your kids FIRST: There is a program called CHIP which enables families with lower incomes but not qualifying for Medicaid to purchase health insurance for their children. Please, please, please insure your kids.

Catastrophic or Major Medical insurance plans: These plans are insurance policies that provide coverage at the higher end of the risk spectrum – for example, when a person has a major medical illness or cancer, or requires a hospital stay. The coverage is usually affordable, but the time to buy it is when one is healthy – not after an illness is diagnosed. Such coverage usually excludes routine preventive care or prescriptions, but is useful in preventing personal financial crisis in the case of an unexpected illness.

Innovation and persistence: Remember, the general principle of rewarded persistence applies here. Patients who do their best and don't give up usually will find some way to get the care they need. Ask for help. Follow up. Use multiple resources. There is always a way. **Take charge.**

Persons unable to qualify for any of these programs, or who have needs falling beyond the scope of such agencies, still have many options. Local ministers and churches can direct residents to various faith-based resources. Several pharmaceutical company-based helps are available to assist low-income persons in purchasing needed medications. Clinics usually have this information, but one key website would be <http://www.pparxor.org>. A helpful organization assisting people with this is the OATH program, <http://www.oathprogram.org>.

The following is a listing of COASTAL BEND AREA HEALTHCARE-RELATED RESOURCES, in alphabetical order:

AI-Anon 986-0799
Alcoholics Anonymous (Central Info) 992-8911
Alliance for the Mentally Ill 855-9869
American Cancer Society of C.C. 857-0136
American Diabetes Assn. 850-8778
American Heart Assn. 692-0606
American Lung Assn. 1-800-586-4872 or 1-800-227-9726
Attention Deficit (ADD, ADHD) 1-800-233-4050
Beyond Grief, Bereavement Support Group 881-3159
Coastal Bend AIDS Foundation. 814-2001
Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse - Coastal Bend 884-343
24 hr. Crisis Helpline 1-800-999-9999
Crime Victim Hotline 1-800-983-9933
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation 1-800-344-4823
Dyslexia Referral 1-800-222-3123
Epilepsy Assn. 210/653-5353
Family Outreach 888-6041
Family Forward 852-9665, Ext. 207
First Friday 851-8959
La Leche League 985-0705
March of Dimes 855-4215
Medic Alert 1-800-432-5378
Multiple Sclerosis Society, (S.TX Chapter) 225-2342
Muscular Dystrophy Assn 806-2704
Narcotics Anonymous Helpline 992-2113
National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE
Natl. Federation of the Blind 410/659-9314
National Kidney Foundation 884-5892
Nueces County Senior Citizens Center 387-6396
Palmer Drug Abuse 887-8900
Parkinsons Support Group. 853-9303
Sex Addicts Anonymous 850-2136
Stroke Club of C.C. 991-2363
Texas Youth Hotline 1-800-210-2278
Timons Ministries 937-6196 or 939-9533
United Cerebral Palsy of Texas (Austin, TX) 512-472-8696

COUNSELING

Family Counseling Service 852-9665
Planned Parenthood of S. Texas 855-9107
Psychiatric Triage (MHMR Crisis Line - after hours) 814-8633

ASSISTANCE (Hospice)

Aim Hospice (Rockport, TX) 729-0507
Spohn Hospice 881-3159
VistaCare 854-1540

ASSISTANCE (Other)

Children's Health Insurance (CHIP) 800-647-6558
Chronically Ill & Disabled Children Services (CIDC) 888-7837

Food Bank 887-6291
Nueces County Hospital District 902-4855
(to apply for clinic card)
Ronald McDonald House 854-4073

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Halo Flight 289-2516
Women's Shelter 881-8888

STATE/COUNTY/CITY SERVICES

Health Departments/City/County Health Dept. 826-7200
Adult Health 826-1319
Animal Control 826-4630
Birth Certificates 826-7229
Communicable Diseases 826-7251
Environmental Health 826-7273
Family Planning 826-7265
Food Handlers Classes 826-7273
HIV/AIDS 826-7237
Health Education 826-7220
Immunization Clinic 826-7238
Laboratory 826-7213
Maternal 826-7276
Nursing 826-7277
Sexually Transmitted Diseases 826-7237
TB Control 826-7247
Vector Control 826-4615
WIC 826-1356
Robstown 767-5241
San Patricio County 361/364-6208
Bee County 361/358-2241
Kleberg County 361/592-4248
C.C. State School 888-5301
Nueces County MHMR 886-6900
TX Comm. for the Blind 289-8710
TX Dept. of Human Resources 855-9924
Veterans Administration 806-5600

TRANSPORTATION

American Cancer Society 857-0134
American Red Cross 887-9991
Coastal Bend Kidney Foundation 884-5892
Regional Trans. Authority 883-2287

USING THIS GUIDE

Step-by-step process of completing the Healthcare needs assessment interview:

STEP 1: fill in name: _____
date of birth _____
contact information _____

