

Integrated Health Care and You

Are you taking care of yourself ?

As a professional caregiver, you are probably used to being concerned about our clients and their families. But, are you taking care of yourself? Good self care is critical for good consumer care. Consider these facts about self care and communication with doctors that we should not only be teaching our clients, but practicing ourselves!

What are the basics of self-care and why are they important?

You probably already know the basics of self care -- eating 3 balanced meals a day, sleeping 8 hours per night, and getting in 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Consider also the importance of friendships and fun in maintaining balance in life! Good self care helps manage stress, a major contributor to many chronic conditions, including depression, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

What about communicating with my doctor?

Everyone should have an annual visit with a primary care doctor. Regular communication with your doctor is critical for your ongoing self care. In order to be better informed about your health, and to help your doctor be better informed about you, prepare for your visits before you go.

- Prepare a list of your symptoms and concerns, if you have any.
- Tell your doctor about your family history of illness, as well as any personal history of illness, surgery, etc.
- Tell your doctor if you're having trouble eating or sleeping, or if you have any unexplained pain. These are often first signs of illness.
- Ask about your medications and how to use them.
- Ask about how your medicines may interact.
- Ask what preventative tests and measures are needed, and when.

What's on the horizon?

Watch for future editions of the Integrated Care Fact Sheet to address topics such as alternative care, prevention, healthcare and culture, and building and maintaining healthy communities.

For more information about self-care and talking to your doctor, check out these resources:

- <http://my.clevelandclinic.org/patients-visitors/prepare-appointment/questions-to-ask-your-doctor.aspx>
- <http://www.ahrq.gov/legacy/questions/qb/>
- http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-symptoms/SR00008_D

