DOCTOR TERRI

Top 5 Questions

## for Your Healthcare Provider to Ensure Collaborative Care

1

WHAT ARE YOU MOST CONCERNED ABOUT FOR MY VISIT TODAY?

It seems like such a simple and basic question, but patients and providers are often concerned about two quite different things.

Patients have often heard lots of scary things prior to their visit and are most focused on the worst-case scenarios or a less concerning situation that may have happened to their friend or family member. On the other hand, sometimes patients ask no questions at all, trusting that their primary care physician will tell them everything they need to know. But guess what? Sometimes it can be hard for providers to share difficult news, and in an effort to protect the family, may wait to share their concerns later, after further testing, or not share the full extent of certain signs and symptoms. But if you ask, "What are you most concerned about today?" You can get right to the heart of the matter.

2

WHAT MEDICATIONS ARE YOU PRESCRIBING FOR ME TODAY AND WHY?

"Can we review my medications list to make sure there are no drug reactions?" It is extremely helpful to review your medication list at each visit and to determine if you still need those medications, after discussion with your primary care physician — especially medicines that you have been on for several years. It is also especially important to review all medications whenever a new drug is introduced. Ideally your primary care physician will know all your medications but if their colleague is covering, or in the event that you need to make an unexpected visit to the emergency room, you'll want to make sure that everyone knows what medications you are on and why. Always keep a copy of all your medications with you. This is especially true if you have a complex medical history with multiple providers who may not be aware that a new medication they are providing may interact with a medication that a different provider has prescribed for you for a different condition.
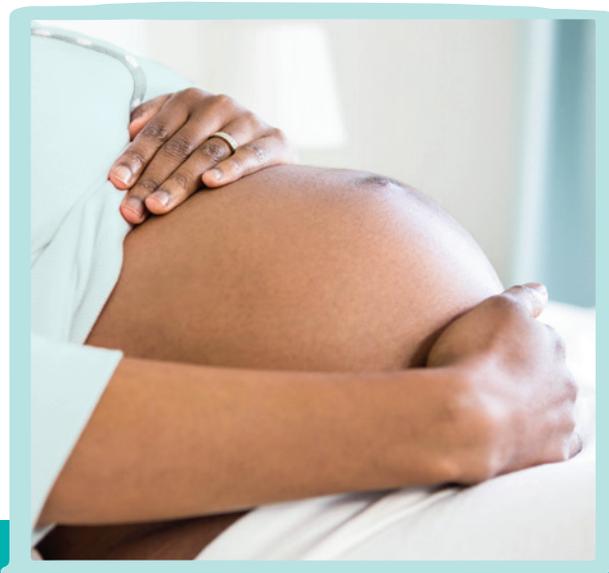
3

IF THIS TREATMENT DOES NOT WORK, WHAT ARE OUR OTHER OPTIONS?

"What symptoms should I look for?" This is an especially important question, especially when your primary care physician is adjusting your treatment for another therapy. This can happen for many common conditions associated with pregnancy, including hypertension, diabetes or medications for anxiety or depression. Not all providers will share what the next step is in their treatment plan, but for some patients it helps to know what might come next in the event that this therapy does not work and what symptoms one should look for to determine if the therapy is working.

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4 DO YOU ANTICIPATE ANY LONG-TERM COMPLICATIONS FROM THIS MEDICATION, PROCEDURE OR THERAPY?

Patients sometimes require procedures, therapies or medications that are necessary to address other conditions which, if left untreated, could cause major complications. Some medications and some therapies may cause side effects as well. Your provider will have to carefully consider the pros and cons of any therapy or medication when deciding to offer a trial of therapy.
As a partner in your care and all treatment decisions, you should be aware of any potential complications associated with any procedure or side effects associated with any medication.

5 WHEN IS MY NEXT VISIT? WHAT SHOULD I BE LOOKING FOR OR MONITORING UNTIL OUR NEXT VISIT?

"What will you be looking for at my next visit?" Make sure that at the end of your appointment you understand what the primary care physician is monitoring for, what medications or therapies have been adjusted and what symptoms you should be watching for. Also, clarify any questions you may have about your treatment plan until the next visit. Do not forget to share any plans for travel, any changes in your schedule or any other doctors visits you may have scheduled.

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Dr Terri's Top 5 Questions for Collaborative Care were first published in her book
Early Arrival: 9 Things parents need to now about life in the Neonatal ICU