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The following slides were presented during the educational portion of IFFGD’s 2020 Virtual Advocacy Event. To view this presentation and the all videos available during this program, please visit https://bit.ly/Adv_Edu.

How to prepare for seeing your doctor

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Why prepare?

• Time may be limited
  • Clinic appointment length
  • Scheduling lag times

• Diagnostic effort may be wasted
  • Avoid reinventing the wheel

• You are the best person to tell this story
  • Take control of the narrative
  • Aim for a story that is accurate, coherent, and comprehensive

Elements of preparation

• Know your story
  • Emphasize timeline: “it all started when,” “things got worse when”
  • If symptoms feel vague, practice describing them
    • “Upset stomach” → “cramping upper abdominal pain for about an hour after I eat”

• Know current medications (names and dosages), including OTC drugs

• Know what’s already been done to evaluate this problem
  • Bloodwork
  • Imaging tests
  • Endoscopy/colonoscopy (with biopsy results, if relevant)
  • Other specialized testing
Elements of preparation

• Know what’s already been done to treat this problem
  • What’s been prescribed
  • What’s been taken
  • At what dosage
  • Did it help?
  • Why was it stopped?

• Know what hasn’t been done
  • Medications discussed but not yet tried
  • Testing discussed but not yet performed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication</th>
<th>Response (dose, if known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metoclopramide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domperidone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethanechol</td>
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<tr>
<td>erythromycin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phenoxybenzamine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prucalopride</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antinauseants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ondansetron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promethazine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pimozaparazine</td>
<td>etc. (25 more lines)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Records: what do you need to bring?

• When in doubt, bring them

• Even if they’re “in the system”:
  • Records get lost (or be hidden)
  • Records are often sent and received by non-clinicians
  • Clinicians don’t always review records ahead of time
Records: what do you need to bring?

• More important (objective):
  • Procedure reports
  • Pathology reports
  • Imaging reports
  • Laboratory values

• Less important (relatively):
  • Hospital progress/nursing notes
  • Patient instructions

Summary

• Beyond time and energy, there’s little downside in overpreparing
  • Knowledge is power, even if tests are repeated or some pages go unreviewed

• Confusing clinical stories still benefit from logical frameworks