

# How to become an educated patient

August 7 2018, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

---



(HealthDay)—Emergency treatment rarely allows you much time to consider your options. But what about care that can be done on your timetable?

There are many tools available to help you understand the pros and cons of nearly any procedure and—through an open discussion with your [health-care](#) provider—determine what's best for you.

Research shows that using decision-making tools helps in many circumstances, such as when there's more than one accepted [treatment option](#), when no one option has an obvious advantage, and when each option has pros and cons that could affect you differently.

Become an educated patient by using pamphlets, videos and other [online resources](#) from recognized [health organizations](#). These tools will improve your knowledge, help you determine what's most important to you (such as whether the potential outcome outweighs any risks), provide you with more accurate expectations, and let you feel more confident about your decisions.

If you're unsure of where to get the information you need, ask your doctor's office for resources. The governing bodies of nearly all medical specialties are good starting points, and almost all have websites you can access, as do the many branches of the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

Remember that you have the right to get a second and even a third opinion if what you find out conflicts with your first doctor's recommendation. Also, talk to a representative from your medical insurance company to fully understand whether these options are covered and what happens if the second opinion provider is out-of-network.

With the changing face of [health](#) care, it's never been more important to become your own advocate. Education is the key.

**More information:** You can access all the branches of the [U.S.](#)

[National Institutes of Health](#) online. Then search through the one that covers your specific medical condition for detailed information.

Copyright © 2018 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: How to become an educated patient (2018, August 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-patient.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.