

Finding a Great Patient

Most patients probably believe that the only thing that really matters to the doctor is that they pay the bill. While that is important, that's not what makes a doctor look forward to seeing a patient. And let's face it, if the doctor enjoys seeing a patient, they will probably spend more time with them—just human nature.

Fill out all of the paperwork completely and without grumbling. We hate it too. Let the doctor know of any special or important items. Some people need help coping with the visit and for them something like explaining all of the procedures while doing them is important. This is not an imposition on the doctor. Some patients do not want to know anything, that's their way of coping. Let the doctor know how they can make you comfortable. Ask any questions you might have, even if it seems like a simple one—it may lead to others you hadn't thought of. If you are not comfortable asking the doctor right away, ask the assistant when they bring you to the chair. A good assistant will be eager to tell you all that they know. When the doctor tells you that you need some work done, ask how many visits, how long, how much pain, any restrictions.

Be sure to ask how much it will all cost, how much insurance usually pays, and how payments are expected. If the doctor cannot answer these questions, they should have someone in the office that does that on a regular basis. Do not get into misunderstandings about payments with a doctor/office you like. You will probably end up leaving the practice out of spite. If you are dissatisfied or "concerned" about anything in the office, let the doctor know. They appreciate your interest in making the practice better. If they don't, you can find a better office for your visits.

If you really want to be a great patient, send a thank you note, e-mail or call when you are pleased with how things went. And most of all, refer all of your great patient friends, co-workers, and relatives.