

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE HEALTH CARE WHILE YOU ARE IN PRISON



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DOC Health Care staff can provide you with adequate health care if you follow some guidelines:

- ▶ Learn about maintaining good health, and do everything you can to stay healthy:
- ▶ Eat well;
- ▶ Drink plenty of fluids;
- ▶ Get regular exercise;
- ▶ Get enough rest.

If you consistently abuse your body, it isn't reasonable to expect the medical staff to fix it.

Most people in the community don't get treated by a doctor for such things as colds, flu, a virus, or occasional headaches. They rely on over-the-counter (OTC) remedies: you will need to do the same while you're in prison.

When you need to write a medical care request, do it carefully:

✍ Don't diagnose your condition: don't say 'I have a virus' or 'I have a sinus infection'. Instead, describe your symptoms and how long you've had them (see below).

✍ Don't make nasty or 'smart aleck' remarks. You will be less likely to get the help you need since people tend not to feel helpful toward someone who treats them disrespectfully.

✍ Always take the medication as prescribed. If you have questions or concerns about the medication or how to take it, be sure to ask.

✍ If you need ongoing medication, be sure to request a refill of the prescription at least one week before you will run out. Also check the new prescription with your old one to make sure they're the same. If they aren't, ask to make sure the new one is correct.

✍ Some medications (for example, digitalis, coumadin, lithium) need to be maintained at a certain level in the blood. Therefore, they require periodic blood tests, and the dose may need to be adjusted after the test.

✍ Attend and be on time for all medical appointments.

✍ Keep copies of all your requests. Also keep a journal or record of what you requested, when you made the request, date of the response, dates of any appointments with medical personnel, what was done or prescribed, and any issues discussed.

DESCRIBE YOUR SYMPTOMS:
PAIN:

- + what: sharp /dull/ achey
- + where: lower back/ left abdomen/ front of head
- + when: after eating/ while urinating/ after a BM/ all the time
- + how long: how long have you had this pain (days, weeks, months)?
- + other symptoms: swelling/ warmth/ blurred vision/ dizziness/ light-headedness

DISCHARGE OR DRAINAGE:

- + where: open sore/ ear/ nose/ throat/ rectum/ vagina/ penis/ breast nipple
- + color: white/ yellow/ greenish/ black/ reddish
- + consistency: thick/ watery/ milky/ stringy/ clots
- + how often?
- + for how long?
- + other symptoms: itching/ burning/ odor/ rash/ pain/ swelling

SKIN RASHES:

- + appearance: bumpy/ weepy
- + color:
- + where:
- + other symptoms: itching/ burning/ swelling/ oozing

Also include a list of medications you have taken/used in the past, and anything you're allergic to.

YOU SHOULD BE SEEN BY
MEDICAL PERSONNEL
IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- !! chest pains
- !! left-sided chest & arm numbness
- !! stomach pain that wraps around to your back
- !! breathing changes that cause you to have to raise your shoulders to help you breathe, or that cause your nostrils to widen to inhale
- !! a headache that is the worst you could possibly stand
- !! persistent vomiting or diarrhea

REQUEST A FUTURE
APPOINTMENT IF YOU HAVE:

- ⊗ shortness of breath
- ⊗ unusual, severe headaches
- ⊗ blurred vision
- ⊗ severe, recurring or long-lasting stomach pain
- ⊗ changes in a wart or mole
- ⊗ lumps in any part of your body
- ⊗ constant thirst
- ⊗ rapid weight loss
- ⊗ frequent urination
- ⊗ failure to heal

NOTES ON THE COMMON
COLD AND FLU:

Colds and flu are caused by viruses; viruses aren't helped by antibiotics.

Beginning symptoms of cold and flu should be treated with over-the-counter

medications, increased intake of clear fluids, healthy diet, and rest.

If vomiting and/or diarrhea continue and fluids are not taken, dehydration (loss of normal level of fluid in the body) may occur. Symptoms include weakness, easily fatigued, thirst and fever. Contact housing staff for medical care, and describe your symptoms.

Post-viral infections may occur which result in sinus and lung infections. You should request medical care for continuing symptoms such as:

- fever
- night sweats
- nasal/ throat drainage
- ringing and pressure in ears
- severe throat pain



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