

[IMAGE]

What We Want from Our Doctors

Previous studies have shown that what your doctor tells you can have a major impact on the your belief system. This has led some doctors to adopt a more patient-centered approach - one in which your doctor works to understand you as a whole, finds common ground, and uses this approach in managing your problem.

Is that the type of doctor you want? If it is, you're certainly not the only one. A recent study in the *British Medical Journal* investigated 865 patients' preferences for a patient-centered approach to care in the general practice setting. Patients were asked to complete a questionnaire before and after a consultation with a primary care practitioner; questions were asked about patient-centered approaches to care and about examination and prescription preferences.

Results showed that 88-99% of the respondents wanted communication with their doctor; 77-87% desired a sense of partnership; and 85-89% emphasized health promotion. Only 63% of the patients prioritized the actual examination, and even fewer had interest in their doctor giving a prescription.

What do we as patients want from our doctor? Perhaps more than anything else, we want a meaningful relationship. We want to feel as if our doctor cares about our health problems, is listening to us, and is working with us to maximize health. Remember these standards whenever you make an appointment with any health care professional.

Reference: Little P, Everitt H, Williamson I, et al. Preferences for patient-centered approach to consultation in primary care: observational study. *British Medical Journal* 2001: Vol. 322, pp 1-7.

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