

HEALTH

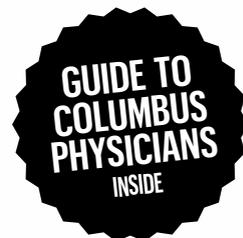
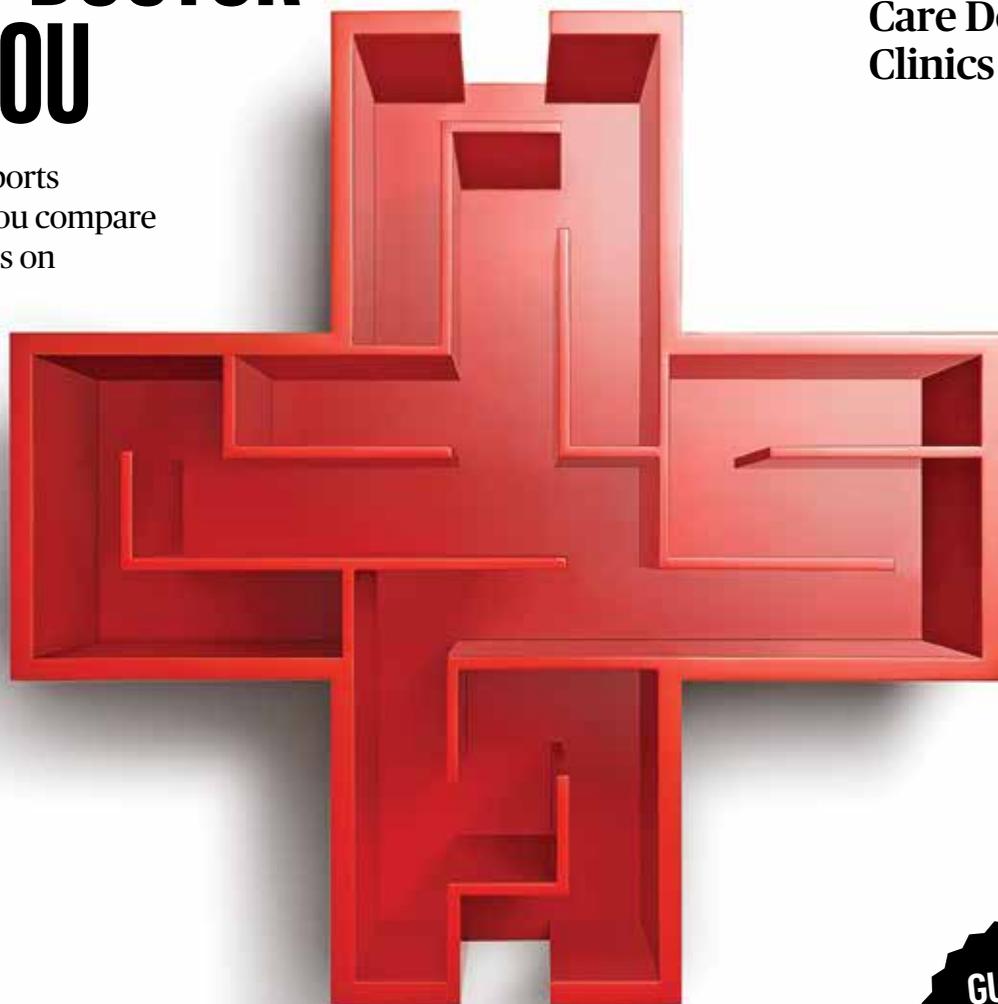
SPECIAL
REPORT FOR
COLUMBUS
RESIDENTS



CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOCTOR FOR YOU

Consumer Reports
Ratings help you compare
medical groups on
key measures

DOCTORS
Ratings
of More
Than 90
Primary
Care Doctor
Clinics



HOW DOES YOUR DOCTOR COMPARE?

The Ratings of primary care physician groups help consumers in eight states evaluate practices on key measures

EVERYONE NEEDS a primary care doctor. That's the person who knows you best, refers you to specialists, and follows up on care. But what do you look for when choosing a primary care doctor?

"For many people, the most important thing is that they like their doctor," says John Santa, M.D., a medical consultant for Consumer Reports who has studied the qualities that make a good physician—and how to measure that—for more than two decades. "They want to feel that their doctor listens and understands them."

Just as important, Santa says, is "whether your doctor is skilled at what he or she is paid to do—keep you healthy, help you recover from an illness or injury, or help you manage a chronic disease, like diabetes or high blood pressure."

You might think it would be easy to find out how well physicians perform those essential functions. But it's not, for several reasons.

To start, there's the size of the doctor population: Almost a million practicing physicians are in the U.S. And roughly half are primary care doctors. Who is responsible for gathering information on them all?

At least as problematic: How is a doctor's performance measured, anyway? After all, primary care doctors take on many tasks—from ordering cancer screening tests to treating infections, from managing chronic diseases such as heart

disease to coordinating care with specialists. So which criteria exactly should they be judged on?

Once those questions get answered, how are physicians persuaded to share that information—or where can interested parties go to gather it? And how can the information be presented in a way that's accepted by medical professionals as accurate and fair, and still be useful to patients?

First Steps

A network of patients, doctors, hospitals, employers, and insurers from 40 regions across the country, funded in part by the

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has over the past several years tried to tackle those problems.

"There's currently little ability to compare physician practices even in the same community, let alone across the country," says Elizabeth Mitchell, president and CEO of the Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement, a nonprofit organization involved in efforts to make physician reporting more standard and transparent. "We need to correct that, so doctors can see how they can improve and so that patients can get information they need to choose doctors."

As part of that effort, eight of those regions—California; Massachusetts; Maine; Minnesota; Washington; Wisconsin; the greater Columbus, Ohio, area; and the greater Detroit area—have agreed to publish Ratings of physician groups in Consumer Reports magazine. "It's an important step in bringing this information directly to consumers," Santa says. "But it also shows how hard it is to rate doctors and how far we still have to go."

For example, some of those regions are much farther along in their efforts than others. Minnesota has now gathered information on nearly all of the primary care providers in the state, thanks largely to a state law that has required doctors to gather and publicly share that information since 2010.

In other states reporting is voluntary



or limited to physicians affiliated with certain health insurance plans or large medical groups. In Massachusetts, for example, the data come from physicians who belong to the state's five largest commercial health insurance plans. In California, the information is limited to doctors who are affiliated with health maintenance organizations. And in Columbus the data come from five of that region's medical groups. So in most of the regions, the information is available for only a subset of physicians.

"These regions all deserve credit for pushing for this effort, as do practices that have agreed to share the information—especially those who may not do so well," Santa says. "That takes courage and a commitment to honesty and transparency—qualities that are also essential to good medicine."

What We Measure

The Ratings Consumer Reports is publishing for each region focus on how well doctors provide evidence-based care for common health problems. Depending on the specific region, those include health concerns such as diagnosing back pain, treating diabetes or heart disease, and how often they provide the right screening tests for breast cancer, colon cancer, and cervical cancer.

"We focused on those areas because

TIPS ON USING THESE RATINGS

1 Check to see whether your doctor's practice, group, or clinic is listed. If it is, see how it compares with others in your area. If it doesn't do as well as others, ask your doctor why, and what the group is doing to improve.

2 If your group is not listed, ask your doctor why it doesn't participate. And ask whether the practice knows how it performs on those measures, even if it doesn't publicly report. Many do have that information. If you're not satisfied with the answers you get, you could consider looking for another group.

3 Gather other information on your physician. That includes everything from whether the doctor accepts your insurance to whether he or she has been disciplined by a state medical board for inappropriate behavior or dangerous care. See "What You Don't Know About Your Doctor Can Hurt You," on page 30 of the May 2016 issue of Consumer Reports magazine for advice on where to go for that kind of information.

they all relate to important, widespread health problems and because how well physicians perform in those measures may provide some indication of their overall quality of care," says Jim Chase, president of MN Community Measurement, the Minnesota organization that has been collecting and reporting data on physician performance since 2003.

Individual Doctors vs. Groups

In all eight of the regions, the Ratings apply not to individual doctors but to groups of physicians, usually relatively small practices that work together in the same office or clinic.

That focus on groups rather than individual doctors is partly because to get statistically meaningful results requires lumping together the results of multiple physicians.

But there's another reason. "Yes, your specific doctor is important," Chase says. "But physicians, especially today, almost always practice as part of a team, so how good a job they do also depends on how good that teamwork is."

In addition, doctors, like the rest of us, sometimes move from one job to another, or to another town or state. Because many patients stick with their physician group rather than follow their doctor, it's important to get insight into how well the whole practice performs.

Columbus THE POWER OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The doctor Ratings in the greater Columbus area include information on more than 90 medical clinics belonging to five of the region's medical groups. Physicians working in those practices represent about a quarter

of the doctors in the area. Why aren't more participating? As in most places in the country now experimenting with physician ratings, medical groups in the Columbus area that take part in the effort do so voluntarily.

And, no surprise, groups are more likely to join in if they do well. In fact, 19 clinics in the area earned a top score in at least two of the three measures in the Ratings, which are based on the percentage of people who are appropriately

screened for colon cancer, or get their diabetes or high blood pressure under control. By contrast, only four clinics in the Ratings received bottom scores in at least two measures.

Should you avoid clinics that earned low or average scores? "No," says Jeff Biehl, president of the Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus, the nonprofit organization that collects data on physician performance in the area.

For one thing, clinics

that report even when they are below average deserve credit for making their information public. "That shows they're committed to transparency—and improving the quality of the care they provide their patients," Biehl says. The ones you might be more worried about, Biehl says, are those who don't report at all.

And clinics that score low may have reasons for why they don't perform as well. Particularly notable: PrimaryOne Health.

That's a community health center with nine locations in the area, all of which care for underserved populations.

It decided to share results anyway—and despite the challenges, it still earned a high score in treating its patients with high blood pressure.

"We hope these Ratings will improve the care clinics provide and encourage them to report their results," says Doris Peter, director of the Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE RATINGS?

These Ratings of primary care clinics include information on more than 90 practices in Columbus, Ohio, and neighboring communities in Franklin County. The clinics all belong to one of five large medical groups in the area: Central Ohio Primary Care, Mount Carmel Medical Group, OhioHealth, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, and PrimaryOne Health. Physicians working for those groups account for about 25 percent of the primary care doctors in the area. The Ratings are published in conjunction with the Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus, a nonprofit organization that is working to improve healthcare transparency in and around Columbus.

What Are the Clinics Rated On?

The clinics are rated on three measures:

- 1.** Colon Cancer Screening is based on the percentage of patients ages 50 to 75 who had appropriate screening for colorectal cancer.
- 2.** Diabetes Care is based on the percentage of patients ages 18 to 75 with diabetes who have their long-term blood sugar (HbA1c) levels less than or equal to 9 percent.
- 3.** High Blood Pressure is based on the percentage of patients ages 18 to 85 with high blood pressure who have their blood pressure levels under control.

How are the Scores Determined?

Ratings are divided into four categories, with 4 being better and 1 worse. The scores are based on

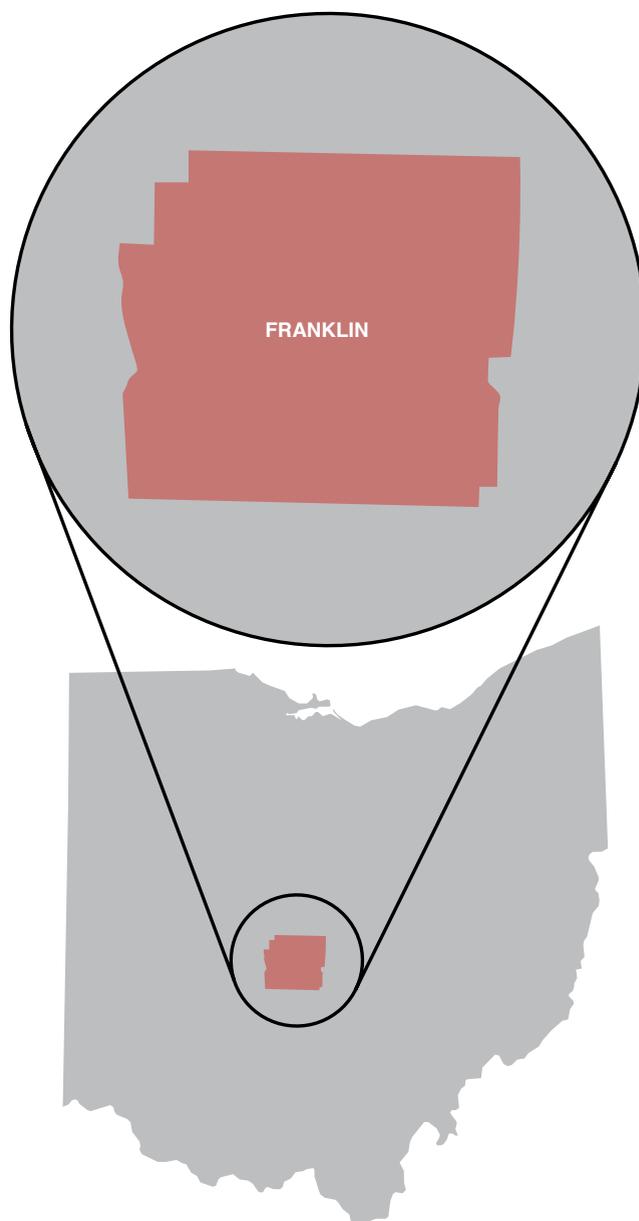
comparisons with national targets for each measure that have been established by the Department of Health and Human Services. For Colon Cancer Screening, top-scoring clinics are at or above the national target; those that receive a 3 are slightly below it; clinics that earn a 2 are lower still; and those with a 1 are substantially below the national target. For Diabetes Care and High Blood Pressure, top-scoring clinics are substantially above the national target; those that receive a 3 are at or somewhat above it; clinics that earn a 2 are somewhat below the target; and those with a 1 are substantially below the national target.

How Should I Use the Ratings?

Check the Ratings to see whether your doctor's clinic is listed and if so, how it compares with other clinics in your area. If your doctor's clinic is not listed, ask him or her how the group performs on these measures. Some doctors know that information and should be willing to share it with you.

Where Can I Find More Details?

Go to the website for the Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus, at ourhealthcarequality.org, to find more about the performance of physician practices in the Columbus area. The site also has additional information on other measures, such as C-section rates at hospitals in the region and comparisons of local nursing homes.





NAME	CITY	COLON CANCER SCREENING	DIABETES CARE	HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
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CENTRAL OHIO PRIMARY CARE (COPC)

COPC Amico and Associates	Westerville	4	3	4
COPC Amy R. Kelley, M.D.	Columbus	3	4	4
COPC Arlington Mill Run	Hilliard	4	4	3
COPC Brackin Porter Family Medicine	Columbus	1	2	3
COPC Capital City Medical Associates	Columbus	1	3	3
COPC Central Ohio Medicine	Columbus	4	4	3
COPC Chen and Associates	Columbus	2	4	2
COPC Columbus Internal Medicine	Columbus	1	4	4
COPC Dublin Internal Medicine	Dublin	3	4	4
COPC Fairway Family Physicians	Columbus	3	3	3
COPC Faith Family Health	Columbus	1	1	2
COPC Family Medicine and Pediatrics	Canal Winchester	1	3	2
COPC Family Medicine North	Columbus	4	4	4
COPC Family Physicians of Gahanna	Gahanna	1	3	3
COPC Family Practice Center of Westerville	Westerville	4	3	4
COPC Internal Medicine Group	Westerville	3	4	3
COPC Jasonway Internal Medicine	Columbus	4	4	3
COPC LaHue, Gramann, Boezi & Coss	Columbus	4	3	4
COPC Marysville Primary Care	Marysville	3	3	4
COPC McConnell Family Practice	Marysville	3	2	1
COPC Michael R. Ports, M.D.	Westerville	4	-	4
COPC Northside Internal Medicine	Westerville	4	4	4
COPC Northwest Family Physicians	Hilliard	4	3	2
COPC Parsons Avenue Medical Clinic	Columbus	2	2	3
COPC Provider Physicians East	Reynoldsburg	1	2	3
COPC Provider Physicians North	Columbus	3	4	3

NAME	CITY	COLON CANCER SCREENING	DIABETES CARE	HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
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CENTRAL OHIO PRIMARY CARE (COPC) continued

COPC Riverside Medical Group	Columbus	4	3	3
COPC Scioto View Family Practice	Columbus	3	3	4
COPC Stonegate Family Health	Reynoldsburg	3	3	4
COPC Stonegate Medical Associates	Reynoldsburg	1	2	3
COPC Suburban Internal Medicine	Columbus	4	3	4
COPC Tri County Family Physicians	Canal Winchester	2	3	3
COPC Westerville	Westerville	4	4	4
COPC Westerville Internal Medicine	Westerville	2	2	4
COPC Westerville Medical Associates	Westerville	3	3	4
COPC Worthington Internal Medicine	Worthington	4	4	4

MOUNT CARMEL MEDICAL GROUP (MCMG)

MCMG Diley Ridge	Canal Winchester	2	2	3
MCMG Granville	Granville	2	3	3
MCMG Grove City	Grove City	1	1	2
MCMG Hilliard	Hilliard	3	2	3
MCMG New Albany	New Albany	2	2	3
MCMG North	Westerville	1	2	4
MCMG Pickerington	Pickerington	3	3	3
MCMG Taylor Station	Columbus	3	4	3
MCMG Trivillage	Columbus	3	3	3
MCMG Upper Arlington	Columbus	2	1	2
MCMG Victorian Village	Columbus	1	2	2
MCMG Wedgewood	Powell	2	1	4
MCMG Westerville	Westerville	1	2	3
MCMG Worthington	Worthington	4	2	4
Mount Carmel Health Stations	Columbus	1	1	2



NAME	CITY	COLON CANCER SCREENING	DIABETES CARE	HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
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OHIOHEALTH

Bexley Health Services at Wexner Heritage Village	Columbus	-	-	4
Doctors Hospital Family Practice Center	Grove City	-	-	3
Grant Family Practice	Columbus	-	-	3
Max Sports Medicine Dublin	Dublin	-	-	3
OhioHealth Pickerington - Hill Rd.	Pickerington	-	-	3
OhioHealth Pickerington - Refugee Rd.	Pickerington	-	-	2
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians All Seasons Drive	Hilliard	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians at Huntington	Columbus	-	-	2
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians East Main St.	Lancaster	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Eastpointe	Blacklick	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Gahanna	Gahanna	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Galloway	Galloway	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Grove City	Grove City	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Hilliard-Nike Dr.	Hilliard	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Hilliard-Scioto Darby	Hilliard	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Hospital Drive	Dublin	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians London	London	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Market Exchange	Columbus	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Millhon Clinic	Columbus	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Powell	Powell	-	-	4

NAME	CITY	COLON CANCER SCREENING	DIABETES CARE	HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
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OHIOHEALTH continued

OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Reynoldsburg	Reynoldsburg	-	-	3
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians Stonecreek	Pickerington	-	-	4
OhioHealth Primary Care Physicians West Broad Street	Columbus	-	-	3
OhioHealth Westerville Medical Campus	Westerville	-	-	3
Riverside Family Practice	Columbus	-	-	3

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

CarePoint East Family Medicine	Columbus	3	3	3
CarePoint East General Internal Medicine	Columbus	2	3	3
CarePoint Gahanna Family Medicine	Gahanna	2	3	2
CarePoint Lewis Center Primary Care	Lewis Center	3	3	2
General Internal Medicine	Dublin	4	4	2
General Internal Medicine & Geriatrics	Columbus	4	4	3
General Internal Medicine & Pediatrics	Columbus	3	4	3
General Internal Medicine & Pediatrics at Hilliard	Hilliard	1	3	3
OSU Family Practice at Bethel	Columbus	2	3	2
OSU Family Practice at Upper Arlington	Columbus	4	4	3
OSU Family Practice at Worthington	Worthington	3	3	2
OSU Primary Care at New Albany	New Albany	2	3	3
OSU Thomas E. Rardin Family Practice	Columbus	3	3	2
OSU Total Health & Wellness	Columbus	1	3	1

FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS*

PrimaryOne Health	Multiple Locations	-	1	3
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*Federally qualified health centers provide healthcare services to low-income citizens and noncitizens who are medically underserved, underinsured, or uninsured.

6 STEPS TO WORKING BETTER WITH YOUR DOCTOR

People who feel that their physician listens to them and involves them in treatment decisions are more likely to get screened for conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and high cholesterol, and to get the vaccines they need, research suggests.

Of course, it's not always easy to find a doctor who listens. Here are six concerns that commonly crop up in the doctor-patient relationship, and what to do to make the relationship better:

PROBLEM 1

Your Doctor Doesn't Listen

Maybe when you try to tell your doctor what's bothering you, she interrupts, without looking up from her chart or computer screen. Or she's all business, which makes it difficult for you to ask questions, or sticks to a checklist of yes-or-no questions that makes it difficult for you to mention all of your health concerns.

THE FIX Let your doctor know that you feel nervous about asking questions or that you can better focus on what she's saying if she faces you instead of the computer. And instead of relaying just your symptoms ("my head hurts"), tell a full story: Describe when the pain started, your activities at the time, and the physical sensations you're experiencing.

PROBLEM 2

Your Doctor Makes Decisions Without Your Input

Your doctor should always discuss the pros and cons of treatment options, then help you make an informed choice. That shared decision-making can increase

your chances of positive results because it boosts the likelihood that you'll stick with the treatment. Plus "your satisfaction level will be higher if you feel you've been a part of the decision," says John Santa, M.D., a medical adviser at Consumer Reports. "Your tolerance level, if things don't go well, will be better, too."

THE FIX If your doctor isn't receptive to your ideas, ask how the benefits and risks of his recommendations compare with your preferences. One helpful strategy: Ask whether you can have some time to think about his suggestions. A little breathing room will allow you to do some research so that you have a better handle on your options. Or if you'll be discussing a serious problem, take a family member along with you to the appointment.

PROBLEM 3

Your Doctor Discourages Second Opinions

Second opinions aren't needed for everyday concerns, but if you're facing a potentially serious condition, a diagnosis is unclear, the condition is quite rare, or a course of treatment isn't straightforward or may be risky, having someone else weigh in is wise. Although it's common to be concerned about second-guessing your doctor, remember that physicians consult colleagues all the time.

THE FIX Ask your doctor for her recommendation on who to see for a second opinion, suggests Orly Avitzur, M.D., Consumer Reports' medical director. Or if you have a particular healthcare provider in mind, run it by your current doctor to help get her onboard. When seeing the second doctor, be sure

to take relevant test results so that tests aren't duplicated. Insurance usually covers second (and even third) opinions, but always double-check before you go.

PROBLEM 4

The Doctor's Office Is Disorganized

Perhaps no one returns calls in a timely manner, it's difficult to get drug refills or test results, or the doctor always runs behind. "A disorganized office wastes your time, can result in poor care, and increases the likelihood of medical errors," says Marvin M. Lipman, M.D., Consumer Reports' chief medical adviser.

THE FIX Mention the problem to your doctor. She may be able to address concerns by having a staff member update patients on office wait times every 20 minutes, for instance. If the receptionist or office manager seems receptive, ask how to communicate efficiently—by secure email, perhaps—or whether you can book appointments and get test results and prescription refills via a patient portal. If you're tired of wasting time in the waiting room, try booking the first appointment of the day, or call the office before you go in for an appointment to get an estimate on wait times. And go out of your way to treat office staff well.

PROBLEM 5

You Feel Your Doctor Doesn't Respect You

Does your physician "scold" you about your weight or your sedentary lifestyle? Or do you think she's being patronizing because of your age?

THE FIX Keep in mind that you both have the same goal—your

health—and she may not realize how her behavior or delivery affects you, or understand how challenging a health problem may be for you. So let your doctor know that you feel criticized or dismissed. And if you're struggling with a problem—for example, quitting smoking—ask whether she can recommend extra support, such as a structured smoking cessation program.

PROBLEM 6

Your Doctor Withholds Information About Your Health

In some cases, a doctor may not fully discuss the costs or potential side effects of a medication or procedure, or may be uncomfortable about sharing bad news when a patient is dealing with a serious illness. Though some of us might feel overwhelmed by medical details or negative news, not having the entire picture may lead you to stop taking a vital drug or ignore her advice. "When patients believe in their doctor, they have better results," Santa says.

THE FIX Tell your doctor that you want to know about side effects, recovery periods, and more.

HOW TO TALK YOUR DOCTOR'S LINGO

As the patient, it's your right—and even your responsibility—to fully understand your diagnosis, your outlook, and the possible treatments in terms that are comprehensible. Here are a few tips to ensure that you and your doctor are speaking the same language.

- Take someone with you, especially if you will be talking about test results, treatments, or a hospital admission. A second pair of ears or, better yet, another mouth to ask questions, can be invaluable in such emotionally fraught situations.
- Take notes or ask

permission to record the conversation.

- Don't be intimidated. If there's something you don't understand, interrupt to ask for an explanation in plain language. (You are also legally entitled to an interpreter if you don't understand English.)
- Never nod your head

or give any other indication that you understand something if you really don't.

- Ask for references or online sources so that you can read up on the diagnosis or treatment.
- Repeat what you think you heard so that your doctor will know whether

you're both on the same page. That recap might be the most important tool you have to avoid miscommunication or misunderstanding.

- Leave the door open for anything you may have forgotten by saying, "If I have any questions, I will call or use the online patient portal."
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ConsumerReports[®]

 **Healthcare Collaborative**
of Greater Columbus