

# Talking to your doctor

Here are some questions you can ask your doctor to get the discussion started:

## About my disease or disorder—

- What is my diagnosis?
- What caused my condition?
- Can my condition be treated?
- How will this condition affect my vision now and in the future?
- Should I watch for any particular symptoms and notify you if they occur?
- Should I make any lifestyle changes?

## About my treatment—

- What is the treatment for my condition?
- When will the treatment start, and how long will it last?
- What are the benefits of this treatment, and how successful is it?
- What are the risks and side effects associated with this treatment?
- Are there foods, drugs, or activities I should avoid while I'm on this treatment?
- If my treatment includes taking a medication, what should I do if I miss a dose?
- Are other treatments available?

## About my tests—

- What kinds of tests will I have?
- What do you expect to find out from these tests?
- When will I know the results?
- Do I have to do anything special to prepare for any of the tests?
- Do these tests have any side effects or risks?
- Will I need more tests later?

Understanding your doctor's responses is essential to good communication. Here are a few more tips:

- If you don't understand your doctor's responses, ask questions until you do understand.
- Your recollection of the discussion might be enhanced if you take notes while talking with your doctor—or ask a friend or family member to take notes. A tape recorder may also help.
- Your doctor can write down his or her instructions for you.
- Your doctor may have printed material he or she can provide to you.
- If you still have trouble understanding your doctor's answers, ask where you can go for more information.
- Other members of your healthcare team, such as nurses and pharmacists, can be good sources of information. Talk to them, too.