

The Promise of Same Page Care

“You should always be careful when reading books about health. Otherwise you might die of a misprint.”

- Mark Twain

Why have we defied Mark Twain’s advice and written a book about health care?

Part of the answer is that it is too big a subject to ignore. All of us are involved one way or another in health care. Eighty percent of Americans visit a doctor every two years and 80% of us take some type of pill ever week. In the last 10 years, we have increased our consumption of medications by 50%!

In 1950 each American spent \$500 (in current dollars) for health care; now we spend \$5000 per person. In comparison, the Spanish, Canadians and Swiss spend between \$2000 and \$3000. A large portion (35-50%) of the American public agrees that the health care system is broken.

Another justification for writing this book is based on scientific evidence: test results show that the tools and approaches described in this book will add value to health care.

How’s Your Health? places the highest priority on the front-line of health care. The “front-line” is where the problems are real, not abstract, understandable, not obscure.

The “front-line” is where Esther and her mother work with the health professionals to understand and manage



“How’s Your Health, a simple web-based health survey tool, is proving remarkably useful to a wide variety of users, including patients and providers alike, with potential rewards not only in satisfaction but also in cost savings and improved clinical outcomes.

“This survey, which asks a series of multiple choice questions and takes about ten minutes to complete, is used by thousands of patients and consumers on their own and through programs sponsored by employers, health care systems and physician groups.”

Institute for Health Care Improvement

2004

diabetes. The “front-line” are the health professional “waiters” who listen, takes the orders, and start the chain of events that ought to result in a 100% satisfying health care for their customers. The “front-line” is us. The “front-line” is our son, or daughter, or parent.

At this “front-line” not being on the “same page” is strongly linked to errors and harms, unwanted variation in care, and many wasted costs. *How’s Your Health?* offers easy-to-follow steps to improve “same page” care and solve personal problems.

Four Steps

Step One: If you have any ongoing health problems get a consistent doctor or health care team.

Cost to you: Nothing except persistence.

Cost to the health system: Nothing.

Current situation: Less than 50% of Americans have the same doctor over a five-year period.

Twenty-five years ago, as director of a large clinical group, I had to make a decision. Should the system make an extraordinary effort to ensure high levels of continuity between patients and the health professionals or was it safe and acceptable to have less stringent continuity of care?

A study involving 700 adults answered the question. Some received very high continuity and the others received “usual” care. Two years later the results showed that having the same health professionals was a very healthy choice: patients with the same health care professional were more satisfied and used 30% less hospital care than the patients who less often saw the same health professionals.

This study put to rest any question about the value of continuity. Continuity has many good impacts. Insist on it!

Step Two: Get good health information.

Cost to you: Your time.

Cost to the health system: Nothing.

Current Situation: “Health Information” for preteens and teens is generally whatever a peer tells them. Adults use many non-physician sources of health information such as:

- Books and pamphlets: 40-50%
- Friends and family: 35-45%
- Pharmacists: 25-35%
- Internet: 20-30%
- Health Fairs: 5-15%

Less than half of the information given by health professionals is easy to understand. In contrast, patients consider more than half of the information on the internet equal to or better than that received in their doctor’s office. However, it is often difficult to find what you want or what matters to you among the thousands of internet health sites. Most of these sites electronically track you, have something to sell, or badly overstate opinions. For this reason we urge familiarity with two reliable gateways to health information on the internet. Both will direct you to other high quality, non-commercial sources of information. Both are available in English and Spanish:

- medlineplus.org (encyclopedic)
- www.howsyourhealth.org (“what matters” by age).

Step Three: “Do it yourself” assessment, behavioral change, and problem self-management.

Cost to you: Your time, effort, and commitment.

Cost to the health system: Nothing

Current Situation: Our health behaviors may contribute to about 50% of early deaths and a lot of illness. People still smoke despite its huge impact on health; obesity is increasing everywhere; sexually transmitted diseases increase; the list goes on!

None of us live perfectly healthy lives. It is hard to do what is best. When given advice by a doctor, 25% of us will not follow the advice. We most often don't follow the advice because the doctor and we are not “on the same page.” But 25-40% of the time it seems too difficult to follow the advice.

Nevertheless, over time each of our attempts to improve a behavior or solve a health problem adds up. For example, many younger smokers do quit as they get older. About 25% of American drinkers stop drinking as they age.

The more we are supported – surrounded by persons who know how to manage these issues – the more likely we will be successful. Advice that is tailored to “what matters” is easier to understand and follow.

When we use the HowsYourHealth assessment (about every 2-5 years), we check-up on how we are doing. We receive up-to-date information to help us do better. If we need to solve problems, the HowsYourHealth Problem-Solving program (done as often as needed) is available to keep us on the path to better health. Use the blog on HowsYourHealth to share ideas, too.

Step Four: Demand the health system get on the “same page” and support your self-management.

Cost to you: Your time, effort, and commitment.

Cost to the health system: Nothing in the long term; in fact, waste reducing and cost saving when the health system is reorganized to deliver better “same page” care.

Current Situation: The health system is frequently not “on the same page” with patients; productive communications are not the focus of the system; errors, harms and suboptimal care are the results; resistance to change by existing educational, research, training, and patient care systems.

Health systems designed to support productive communication always result in better care. The speed with which professional health systems focus on communication “at the front line” depends on the speed with which the message of *How’s Your Health?* is pushed by persons like you.

When you are in a doctor’s office, you are often asked to remember many things. Wouldn’t it be great if you were routinely re-contacted by phone to find out how a prescribed care plan is working or to receive reinforcement about changes you are trying to make? Wouldn’t it be great if e-mail were available for you to ask questions, get results, or refill medications?

Despite the obvious advantage for “same page” care to patients, health professionals worry about the hassle (and loss of revenue) from using telephone care or e-mail.

In fact, the patients helped most by telephone care are generally those for whom the office staff is already spending a lot of time in rework--re-asking the same

question, picking up problems that could have been identified earlier, etc. Most practices are finding that Email is a very useful tool to increase efficiency and communication. Therefore, telephone and E-mail time spent by the practice to truly get “same page” care should be offset by time saved from frustrating waste.

Remember Esther and her mother? Even if Esther and her mother had excellent telephone follow-up from the office visit by phone and used the HowsYourHealth web-site and its “blog,” they might have unanswered questions about living with diabetes. Shared medical appointments (also known as group visits) enable patients, such as Esther’s mother, to spend up to 90 minutes with clinicians and other patients. Group visits work because the 8-14 participants learn how to manage their problems and their concerns from each other. Participants may attend many or only one session. We always find that once health care professionals have been involved in a group visit, they improve the style of interaction with their patients. They listen better and they become much better at letting patients take control of their own care.

The evidence is overwhelming that many of the problems with American health care stem from its inability to place health professionals and you on the “same page.” HowsYourHealth and the changes in health care it supports are specifically designed to improve “same page” care.

We recognize that that many of the financial and organizational difficulties in health care are not going to be solved by “same page” care alone. But getting on the “same page” is a very important and easily implemented way to improve health and health care.

It may take a long time before the entire health care system can deliver “same page”, safe, effective health care in a timely and efficient way. Take these actions to minimize your risk for harm while you wait for higher quality health care.

Risk Factors		
Categories that Place You at Risk For Harm	Risk Increase	What You Can Do to Reduce Risk
You think your medicines are making you sick (see Note 1 at far right)	300%	Tell the doctor that your pills may be making you ill. Keep a diary of your pills and when you are ill.
Poor access to care (see Note 2)	150%	Find offices that are willing to telephone patients, use e-mail, or offer same-day appointments.
You don't feel confident managing health problems	130%	Make sure the doctor or nurse knows about your lack of confidence. Use "Problem Solving" on www.howsyourhealth.org . Ask about Shared Medical Visits.
The care you receive often wastes your time (see Note 3)	100%	Work with the office by serving on a patient advisory board. Find an efficient office.
You are taking three or more medicines (see Note 1)	90%	Review your medications with your doctor and try to reduce the number. Keep careful track of what, when, and why you take medications.
You have financial problems	30%	This risk is often related to access. (See Note 2 at right.) Demand good access and same page care regardless of your wealth.

Notes to table:

- 1. Medicines.** Among Americans with chronic diseases, about 25% report that their medicines may be making them ill and about 20% do not take their medicines because of side effects. Another 10% take medications despite serious problems of which their doctor seems unaware. About 30% have not had their medicines formally reviewed in the past two years.
- 2. Access.** About 15% of all adult Americans rate that it is not easy to see their doctor; 30% if they are low income. About 25% of all Americans have difficulty seeing a specialist. When a doctor is seen, about 20% of Americans report that the doctor did not spend enough time. Full access to medications is limited by medication cost for 35% of all Americans.
- 3. Efficiency.** About 40% of Americans report that the care they receive is inefficient. Common examples of inefficiency are retelling the same story, the doctor does not have needed medical records or test results, and there is duplicate testing.

How do you get doctors, nurses, and other health professionals to catch the “same page” metaphor and the importance of HowsYourHealth and its related technologies?

**Is Your Health Care
Less than Perfect?**

If Yes, Write a Prescription to
Your Doctor for:
www.IdealMedicalPractices.org
or www.IdealMedicalHome.org

Directions:

Please take one dose of this
improvement program daily until
your practice is more enjoyable
and efficient and your patients
brag about their
high quality of care.



Before her mother became ill, Esther felt that it was not her job to help health professionals catch metaphors. But after her mother became ill, Esther quickly developed a different perspective. She learned that most health professionals and health systems want to do better. They just need proven, specific methods and tools to improve care. They need to catch the “same page” metaphor.

To help them catch the importance of *HowsYourHealth* and other methods of care improvement, we make available without charge www.IdealMedicalPractices.org to health professionals. This easy-to-use program is based on years of testing and refinement so that it requires very little time to complete.

We recognize that you are busy and that health care is usually not a “100%” issue for you. But when it is 100% for you, a family member, or someone you care deeply about, you will benefit from this book. Consider *How’s Your Health?* an important preventive medicine that is easy to take now. Ultimately the quality of your health and your health care is not what the health system does “to” you; it what the health system does “with” you.

**ideal medical
HOME**

**"I Receive Exactly the HealthCare I Want and Need
Exactly When and How I Want and Need It"**

Home | [Ideal Medical Practices](#) | [Baseline Assessment](#) | [Curriculum](#) | [Technology](#) | [Register](#) | [HowsYourHealth.org](#)

IMP
ideal medical practices

Reinventing
Office Practice

Wally, Louise and Doctor X

Wally is a one of my patients. Wally is 80 and should have died several years ago from his hard arteries, severe heart failure, and mild kidney failure.

But Wally has Louise!! Louise understands every medicine Wally uses and adjusts them based on how he is doing, how much he weighs, and how well he is breathing. They call me whenever they have questions or problems...which is quite rare. They are prepared for his death if Wally should get very sick. They do not want aggressive treatments.

Despite Wally's problems both he and Louise live very active lives. They recently traveled a great distance on vacation where Wally was hospitalized for a mild pneumonia. After two days in the hospital the doctors wanted Wally to have surgery on his prostate and special heart tests at another hospital.

Louise called. She informed me that Wally now looked quite good...better than the many times she had managed his illnesses at home. He was eating, walking, and breathing well.

I talked to Doctor X. Dr. X clearly wanted to treat Wally's abnormal lab tests which were actually better than usual. We could not get Dr. X to agree with Louise, Wally, and me that Wally would do fine at home. Dr. X. was on his own page, not Wally's.

Louise insisted and Wally went home. Dr. X gave Wally and Louise completely new prescriptions with no explanation of what they were for or how to use them. The prescriptions cost four times more than Wally's usual medicines. Louise resumed Wally's usual medicines.

Wally did fine.



PostScript: Using How's Your Health

Getting Started

Go to www.howsyourhealth.org or
www.howsyourhealth.com

How's Your Health home page



The screenshot shows the homepage of the How's Your Health website. At the top left is the logo for How's Your Health, which includes the text 'How's Your Health .org' and a stylized graphic of a person's head and neck. To the right of the logo is the text: 'Your Personalized Guide to the Best Health Care and Medical Care... It's easy, confidential, and it works!'. Below this is a green horizontal bar. On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with the following text: 'About How's Your Health', 'For Physicians and Businesses (Using, Customizing, and Ordering)', a small image of a book cover titled 'HOW'S YOUR HEALTH?', 'Learn More', 'We comply with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information: verify here.', and 'WebMaster'. On the right side of the page, the main content area features the heading 'Take Two Steps To Improve Your Health and Health Care: From Home, Hospital, Workplace, Clinic'. Below this are two numbered steps: '1. Begin Your Health Checkup' with links for 'Español' and '한국어', and '2. Problem Solving, Planning Your Care Readings and Best Websites If You Are Very Sick or Frail'. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a privacy statement: 'Privacy... Absolutely no personal information about you or your computer is stored or shared. Only you decide what to do with the information.'

Choose **Begin Your Health Checkup** near the middle of the home page.

If you received a pass code from your community, your doctor, your employer, or a health system, enter the code or choose the name from the pull down menu. If you do not have a code or community name just choose the option for people who do not have a code.

Welcome to the How's Your Health Check Up!

If your doctor or employer gave you an access code, please enter it here.

Enter your access code:

[Start Survey](#)

If your city or region is a participant, please select the city or region below. Choose your city or region:

Select City or Region
 NJ State Employees
 NJ One Stop
 New Jersey (others)
 Chicago
 Hawaii

[Start Survey](#)

[Click HERE if you do not have a code but would like to do the survey](#)

Enter your access code or choose the option for people who do not have a code.

Don't overlook the opportunity to help others. For example, parents and friends will need to complete *How's Your Health* for children and very old or frail persons. About 25% of the poor need assistance.

How's Your Health is completely private. You are not asked to record your name to use *How's Your Health*. Your computer is not electronically identified.

Take Action

Once you complete the survey, you receive a report that summarizes the important issues that you have identified. It refers to readings that will help you manage problems. You will also receive an Action Form to take or e-mail to your doctor or nurse. (Samples are shown on the following pages.)

Even if you carefully prepare for an office visit, you may not have the vocabulary and means to communicate what really matters to you. The advantage of the Action Form is that allows you and your doctor or nurse to quickly and specifically identify areas in which better communication and education is needed. It's the tool to get them on the "same page" with you. The Action Form makes Esther's mother more than a "sugar."

When a doctor or nurse is busy and can't deal with all of the problems on the Action Form in one day, they know that before the next meeting their patients can look at pertinent readings offered by the web-site. This is a "win" for them and a "win" for their patients.

Sample report

Thank you for completing the *Improve Your Medical Care* questionnaire.

You can print this letter by choosing "Print" from the "File" menu of your web browser. Printing this letter and taking it to your doctor will help to improve the medical care you receive.

Based on your responses to the questions you seem to have some risks to your health that include:

- smoking
- not exercising
- some risky health habits
- your medications may be making you ill
- you are not confident in managing health problems
- the health care you receive is not as good as it can be

Based on your responses to the questionnaire, the Problem-Solving Section may help you manage these issues:

- Daily activities
- Pain
- Physical Activity
- Skin problems
- Asthma or breathing problems
- Backaches

Of these problems and issues some priorities are:

- smoking decreases the average length of life by about 10 years
- your medications should not be making you ill
- you should have some confidence that you can manage some health problems and concerns
- some regular exercise is much better than none

Sample action form

How's Your Health Action Form			
<p>Print this action form and take it to your doctor to improve the medical care you receive. This form is intended for your doctor or nurse.</p>			
<p>Age: 19-49 Gender: Female BMI: 25.8</p>			
ASSETS			
FUNCTION	HABITS	KNOWLEDGE	PREVENTION
Feelings - No problems			
NEEDS			
CLINICIAN ASSESSMENTS	REFERRALS/ACTIONS	SUGGESTED READINGS/EDUCATION	
<p>FUNCTION <i>Difficulty with daily activities</i> <i>Difficulty with social activities</i> <i>Difficulty with pain</i> <i>Difficulty with social support</i> <i>Difficulty with physical fitness</i></p> <p>SYMPTOMS/BOTHERS Headaches Skin problems Breathing problems Back pain Medications maybe making ill</p> <p>CONCERNS OR FAMILY HISTORY Violence/abuse Diabetes</p> <p>HABITS Smoker interested in quitting Generally not good health habits</p> <p>PREVENTION Lacks essential money Possible relationship problem No or not sure pap test No education about birth control No education about sexual diseases No education about mammography/cholesterol</p> <p>OTHER <i>Italics = Clinician Unaware</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exercise and Eating Well ● Health Habits and Health Decisions ● Common Medical Conditions ● Daily Activities and Managing Limitations ● Pain ● Sexual Questions ● Skin Problem ● Women's Health <p style="text-align: center;">RISK-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>Diabetes Needs extra self-management support</p> <p>3 or more meds, more than 3 conditions, or smoker, or alcohol > 10/week</p> <p>Major functional limit or more than three bothersome problems</p>	
<p>Provider: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____</p>			

Suggested Readings and Helpful Links

Your results from HowsYourHealth will include readings based on your responses to the survey.

Sample reading suggestions

Based on your responses to the **HowsYourHealth** questionnaire, we recommend that you read the following sections of the **How's Your Health** booklet. You may read the chapters online by clicking on them below:

- [Exercise and Eating Well](#)
- [Health Habits and Health Decisions](#)
- [Common Medical Conditions](#)
- [Daily Activities and Managing Limitations](#)
- [Pain](#)
- [Skin Problem](#)
- [Women's Health](#)

You can review these readings online any time. To return to the readings at a later time, merely re-enter www.howsyourhealth and give your age and gender and then the readings are re-offered to you. You do not have to answer the questions again.

Helpful links to the best non-commercially sponsored web-sites are included (sample shown next page). For example, for additional information go to www.medline-plus.org. For an important treatment or testing decision, use the link to www.cochrane.org. If your topic is covered, this is the most up to date information about certain conditions and treatments.

We also suggest several “risk” calculators to help you estimate the impact of your current health and habit on your future.

More Health Information Links

How's Your Health Readings

- [Child Chapters](#)
- [Adolescent Chapters](#)
- [Adult Chapters](#)
- [Geriatric Chapters](#)

For Best General Information go to:

- www.medlineplus.gov
- www.healthfinder.gov
- www.familydoctor.org

The "gov" sites also have good links for special diseases.

For diagnosing symptoms:

[Mayo Clinic Symptom Checker](#)

For the best information about a testing or treatment decision go to:

www.cochrane.org

(The language is technical, so you may need help.)

To Calculate Your Future Risk for cancer and some other diseases:

<http://www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu>

To Calculate Your Future Risk for Death from Heart Disease:

www.riskscore.org.uk

(Many like to see how their risk changes too.)

For Best Information About:

Healthy Eating

- www.deliciousdecisions.org/
- www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=9203
- www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/pyramids.html

Exercise and Fitness

- www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm
- www.justmove.org/home.cfm
- familydoctor.org/healthfacts/059/

Quitting Smoking

- dcccps.nci.nih.gov/tcrb/Clearing_the_Air/clearing.html
- [www.cancer.org/\(quitting_smoking\)](http://www.cancer.org/(quitting_smoking))
- http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/10_19.htm

Alcohol Use and Drinking

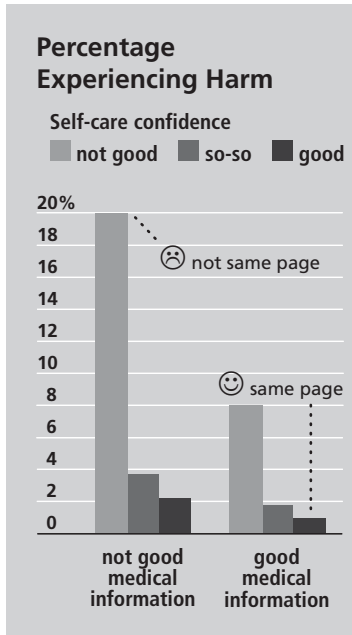
- www.aa.org/default/en_about_aa.cfm?pageid=12
- <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/Resources/RelatedWebsites/>

Sample helpful links for additional information and risk calculators



New!!!

Brief, easy-to-use videos for many links are now available. Just CHOOSE the "camera."



Self-Care and Problem Solving

Information alone will not improve your health and health care. Good self-care and problem-solving skills are also needed, as illustrated in the chart at the left. HowsYourHealth offers some helpful tools to improve self-care and problem-solving.

If you have a medical condition such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, or heart disease, you will receive a Condition Management Form. The information on the Condition Management Form is tailored to chronic conditions. You should use it to anticipate what you need to know and do. It also enables you to compare the care you were receiving to good standards of care.

Along with the Condition Management Form, you receive a diary sheet that helps you keep track of measurements that are most important for the best management of your problems.

The example shown on the next page is for a middle-aged woman who has bothersome back pain, high blood pressure, and asthma. The computer recorded the initial measurements when she completed HowsYourHealth.

WELCOME TO HOW'S YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION SHARING

In 2005, we asked a large number of persons about their interest in sharing information on the internet. About 4 of 10 persons who don't feel very confident to manage and control health problems said that they would like to use the internet to become more confident. SO WE SET UP HOW'S YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION SHARING TO HELP PEOPLE BECOME MORE CONFIDENT. [Brief You Can Do it!](#)

Suggested Topics based on thousands of responses to How's Your Health Problem-solving.

- [Exercise, eating weight control](#)
- [Pain](#)
- [Stress and emotional concerns](#)
- [Preventing disease\(s\)](#)
- [Better managing disease\(s\)](#)
- [Request Other Topics](#)

Remember the several times we have mentioned that HowsYourHealth also contains a web-log (BLOG) through which you can learn and share with others who have similar interests? Here is one more reminder. Give it a try!

Condition Management Form	
<p>Persons who have conditions or diseases like yours can GREATLY improve their health and their medical care by three simple steps.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning about how the care you have been getting might be made better. 2. Learning if there are things you should be aware of. 3. Keeping track of your condition by writing down a few measures from week to week. 	
<p>You have the following disease(s) or condition(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Blood Pressure • Breathing 	
<p>Your care of these conditions may have been made difficult because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fair or poor information about the condition(s) • not much assistance helping you live with the condition(s) 	
<p>High blood pressure issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have not received good education about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The effect of weight and salt on our blood pressure ◦ The problems blood medications might cause you • You seldom check your blood pressure • In the past four weeks, your systolic blood pressure was higher than 150 or lower than 100 <p>Lung disease or breathing issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not be using an inhaled steroid 	<p>Things you should be aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your blood pressure should be no higher than 150/90, even for those 70 years of age or older • avoid high salt • peak flow breathing tests sometimes help with medicine adjustment • inhaled "steroids" often help if you are short of breath most of the time
<p>These are general hints for management. Some are in medical language. You may want to talk about what is written on this sheet with a doctor or nurse when you show them your "Action Form".</p>	

Sample condition management form

What You Check	
	Your Name: _____
Date	03/25/04 _____
Weight	150 _____
Blood Pressure	151-160/81-90 _____
Cholesterol	201-220 _____
What You Notice*	
Pain	_____
Shortness of Breath	_____
<p>*List what bothers you or what you have been told to watch here. Write 1 for great, 2 for "ok", 3 for not so good, 4 for bad, 5 for horrible.</p>	

Sample Diary Sheet

You can use the Problem Solving and blog parts of HowsYourHealth as often as necessary. Problem Solving produces a single page summary for you.

[2. Problem Solving, Planning Your Care Readings and Best Websites If You Are Very Sick or Frail](#)

#1: Everyone Has Problems

Problems are part of living. Some problems are more important than others. Some are more difficult than others.

A problem may be how you manage schoolwork, work, your feelings, or pain. Not being able to manage and control problems is stressful, bad for health, and bad for how we feel.

Good Problem-Solving is useful now. Good Problem-Solving is useful in the future as new problems arise.

These next 10 screens will help you think about a problem and how to solve it. You can go backwards and forwards at any time to change what you have written.

#10 Your Problem Solving Worksheet

Problem: Back Pains

Your Achievable Goal: Be smart about exercise

Your best current solution for achieving that goal: Three times a day do program exercises

Your best current steps to take now:

1. Use 7,11,4 as times for exercise
2. Bring mat to work

Your buddies who can help you:

1. Stephanie
2. Shoshanna

Your Own Portable Health Record

When someone is very ill and their health record is not available, the lack of reliable information increases the chances for error by other health professionals who are not aware of important problems, allergies, etc.

Your health record reflects what health professional report. When they are not on the “same page,” those reports can lead to problems. Studies show that availability of health records can improve “same page” communication.

Current health record software sold by Company A can usually not speak to the health record sold by Company B. If you change doctors, and about 50% of Americans do every 5 years, your electronic medical record does not easily move with you.

Perhaps even more risky is the fact that many Americans have more than one physician. About one in five of Americans with more than one physician say that they do not know who is in charge. Bad things can happen when no one doctor is in charge or when the information one doctor has the other does not know.

To avoid problems, why don't people have and carry their own health records?

HowsYourHealth now allows you to start your own short version health record in a nationally standard language that all health care providers should understand.

You and your doctor can easily edit and update your transportable health record. You can ask your physician or health system to add additional information such as lab tests.

You, emergency professionals, and any one else you trust can review your portable health record by using an internet browser.

What Does Your Doctor See?

You can always print out any forms from HowsYourHealth and hand deliver them to your doctor. You can always take your portable health record to your doctor.

When you use an access code by your doctor to enter HowsYourHealth your doctor will see a summary of responses for her/his patients. No personally identifiable information is available.

The summary information is very helpful to your doctor to see what patient needs exist and how well these needs are being served by the practice.

If your doctor asks you to send her/him your personal information and you send the information, your Action Form and Condition Management Form are sent electronically with your name and date of birth attached. This information may be stored by your doctor in a special program that allows the office staff to identify groups of patients with problems such as those who are bothered by pain or those who require a bowel cancer test.

What Does Your Employer, School, or Community See?

The employer, school or community sponsoring HowsYourHealth will see a summary of responses. No personally identifiable information is available. The summary information is very helpful to the sponsors to see what needs exist and how well these needs are being met.