

HOW TO REPORT YOUR SYMPTOMS



SHARING THE RIGHT DETAILS LEADS TO BETTER CARE

BE SPECIFIC, BE HONEST AND BE ORGANIZED

- **Be specific** – Say what hurts, where, when it started and what it feels like (e.g., sharp, dull, throbbing)
 - Example: Instead of “my stomach hurts,” say: *“I have a sharp pain on the left side of my stomach that started three days ago. It gets worse after I eat, and feels better when I lie down.”*
- **Be honest**, even if you feel embarrassed – doctors need accurate information
 - Don’t leave out details even if they seem unimportant or silly
 - Small details can be important for diagnosis
- **Be organized** – write down when symptoms started, how often they happen and what makes them better or worse
 - Bringing notes can make a big difference in getting the right care

REMEMBER THE ACRONYM ‘OLDCART’

- **Onset** – when did it start?
- **Location** – where do you feel the pain or symptom?
- **Duration** – how long did it last?
- **Characteristics** – sharp, dull, burning, etc.
- **Aggravating Factors** – what makes it worse?
- **Relieving Factors** – what makes it better?
- **Timing** – does it happen at a certain time of day?



REMEMBER, YOUR WORDS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN YOUR DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

SYMPTOM TRACKER

Onset <i>When did it start?</i>	
Location <i>Where is the pain or symptom?</i>	
Duration <i>How long did it last?</i>	
Characteristics <i>Sharp, dull, burning, etc.</i>	
Aggravating Factors <i>What makes it worse?</i>	
Relieving Factors <i>What makes it better?</i>	
Timing <i>Does it happen at a certain time of day?</i>	