

Help After Your Diagnosis

When you receive a diagnosis from your doctor, getting information and support is especially important. Every individual is different, but many people have some of the same reactions and needs. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality describes five basic steps you can take to help cope with your diagnosis, make decisions, and move on with your life.

- Take the time you need-Don't rush important decisions about your health. In most cases, you do not need to take action right away. Taking time to make decisions can make you feel less anxious, better able to cope and more in control, and able to play a key role in decisions. Ask your doctor how much time you can safely take.
- Get the support you need-Look for support from family and friends, support groups of people with a similar condition, and people who have been through a similar situation.
- Talk to your doctor-Your doctor is your partner, and good communication can help you feel more satisfied with your care, and can have a positive effect on things such as symptoms and pain. Getting a second opinion can give you more information and help you make important decisions.
- Seek information-Look for information that is based on careful review of the latest scientific findings published in medical journals.
- Decide on a treatment plan-Work with your doctor to make decisions about a treatment plan that best meets your needs.

APWU Health Plan's Nurse Advisory is a source of information and support, and can be reached 24-hours a day at 888/993-0333. You can find information on the Health Plan website at www.apwuhp.com; the online health library from the Mayo Clinic and Hospital Quality Guide are on the online PPO directory; and links to reliable health sites are on the Health Care and Patient Safety Tips page.