

# SEE YOUR DOCTOR

## Preparing For A Doctor's Visit Could Pay Off

(NAPSA)—What holds greater value, preparing for a doctor's visit before it occurs, or seeking health information after the fact? A new survey reveals that only about one in three people visit doctors' offices armed with information they've already gathered, while close to two in three people seek out information after visiting their doctors.

"There is tremendous value in preparing for a doctor's visit," said Marie Savard, M.D., internist, author and patient advocate based in Philadelphia. "Studies show that doctors base up to 80 percent of their diagnoses on what patients tell them about their symptoms, history and lifestyle."

Preparing in advance for a trip to the doctor helps a patient feel more confident in articulating symptoms and raising issues or questions to the doctor, particularly in situations in which the patient may not understand the doctor's advice. "My advice to all patients is to be informed about your health," Dr. Savard said. "The more you are involved in your health care rather than relying solely on your doctor, the healthier you could be."

The survey of 1,000 Americans also reveals that the majority—seven in 10 people—leave their doctor's office wishing they had asked more questions. Of these, one in four said that they were too intimidated, afraid or embarrassed to ask their doctors questions.

"As a doctor, I want and need my patients to collaborate with me about their health care, because that's good medicine for everyone involved," Savard said. "I think fear is something that can be easily overcome if a patient takes the time before the visit to prepare, rather than arriving unprepared and distracted."

Savard says her most important tip for preparing well for a doctor's visit is to visit a web site that contains health information from sources that doctors trust

and recommend. "Patients have access to credible, physician-trusted information and tools online. One of the newest avenues to quality health and medical information is MerckSource.com, which provides people with access to the types of resources that can help them partner with their doctors in managing their health," Savard said.

### Trusted Health Information Free of Advertising

MerckSource.com provides information and tools from credible, independent, physician-reviewed health and medical sources, including *The Merck Manual—Home Edition*, the world's best-selling home medical book, the *A.D.A.M. Health Illustrated Encyclopedia* and *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*. These diverse resources help make MerckSource.com one of the most comprehensive health information web sites available through the Internet.

"Some doctors may have been skeptical about health information that patients found online in the past," Savard stated. "MerckSource.com provides patients with health information from the types of sources doctors trust, in an interactive, easy-to-understand format."

MerckSource.com offers its information at no charge, has a strict privacy policy and is free of advertising and product endorsements.

### Condition Guides and Virtual Body Tours

MerckSource.com contains easy-to-use, comprehensive "Condition Guides" for more than 25 of the most prevalent chronic

The screenshot shows the MerckSource.com website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Welcome | Sign In | Register' and an email subscription prompt. Below this is a search bar and a sidebar with various links. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Learn About Your Condition' with a 'Condition Guides' link, 'Learn About Your Health' with a 'Visit Health Centers' link, 'Featured on MerckSource' with a list of featured content, and 'Find Help and Support' with a 'Find Help and Support' link. At the bottom, there is a 'Stay Informed' section for a Harvard Health E-Newsletter.

conditions—guides that help patients research and manage their health issues, find support and stay informed. This is complemented by HealthMaps,™ a web resource that organizes more than 2,500 health topics into a logical "walk through" of various aspects of a disease, from its symptoms, causes and risk factors to available tests and ways to help manage the condition.

Colorfully animated Virtual Body Tours also take visitors inside the body for a realistic, up-close look at more than 140 body systems and processes, such as circulation, breathing and digestion.

### Free Harvard Health E-Newsletter

Right now, visitors who register on MerckSource.com can receive a complimentary one-year subscription to the *Harvard Health E-Newsletter*, which features content from Harvard Medical School's well-regarded monthly newsletters addressing health topics and news.

### About Merck

Merck & Co., Inc. is a global research-driven pharmaceutical products and services company. Merck discovers, develops, manufactures and markets a broad range of innovative products to improve human and animal health, directly and through its joint ventures.