

Be honest with your doctor

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By Dr Brighton Chireka

The doctor–patient relationship is central to medical practice and is essential for the delivery of a high-quality service. It forms one of the foundations of contemporary medical ethics. Be honest with your doctors as this relationship relies on trust. Trust is considered the corner stone of effective doctor-patient relationships. Without trust patients may well not access services at all, let alone disclose all medically relevant information. Doctors will not be able to offer a safe and effective medical service if patients are not truthful with their medical information.

Research has shown that at least 25 % of patients do not tell the truth , exaggerate, or purposely leave out details during consultation with their doctors. Several reasons are given as to why many patients do that. Maybe some feel ashamed or they just want to avoid being told off by their doctor. No matter whatever the reason I would suggest that it is better to be honest with your doctor. Your doctor is your advocate and is there to support you. If you do not feel supported or listened to then you may consider registering with another GP and start afresh.

Healthy eating and exercising

Doctors want to know the eating habits of patients and also need to find if the patients are active. Many a times when I ask some patients , they start to fidget and avoid eye contact with me . They then try to "please me " by saying that they eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly. What then surprises me is that my examination and investigations tells me an opposite picture. This then causes problems when it comes to discussing treatment options. Doctors have heard so many stories so nothing will shock or surprise them. It is best to tell them nothing but the whole truth so that they can work with you to come up with a treatment option that suits you perfectly. It is fine to spoil yourself once in a while but be honest about it when asked by your doctor.

Taking of medication

75% of people have problems taking their medication as directed. Some do not even pick up their prescriptions. Others do not even tell their regular doctors about new drugs given to them by other health professionals . There are several medications on the market and if one does not suit you tell your doctor who will be able to review your medication and offer you an alternative. Medicines do not work if you do not take them. It is dangerous if you overdose or take less that recommended. You might even become resistant to it , meaning that the medication stops working altogether. This may mean that you will need to be put on expensive hard to find drugs which you may not afford. We are sadly noticing drug resistance in those who are not taking their Antiretrovirals as directed.

Be honest all the time

My message to every reader of this column is that please be honest with your doctors . Tell them the whole truth and make sure that you have mentioned your ideas , concerns and expectations about the consultation with them. Lying to your doctor does not pay as at the end of the day it's your health that you are putting at risk. Be honest about your alcohol intake , smoking habits and

your lifestyle. Your doctor is not there to judge you but is there to help you to live a healthy life. Make it easier by taking ownership of your health and also raising your hands up if you are not coping well.

I would love to hear from you about things that make you lie to your doctors and also what can be done to make you feel free to open up to your doctor.

This article was compiled by **Dr Brighton Chireka** , who is a GP and a blogger based in Kent in the United Kingdom. Feel free to contact him at info@docbeecee.co.uk and you can read more of his work on his blog at [DR CHIREKA'S BLOG](#)

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