



The Mended Hearts, Inc.

7 STEPS TO BECOMING AN EMPOWERED PATIENT

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7 STEPS

- Take control
- Educate yourself
- Know your rights
- Be part of the team
- Get information
- Voice your opinion
- Make decisions that are right for you

7 STEPS TO BECOMING AN EMPOWERED PATIENT



YOU have the power to improve your life.



1. TAKE CONTROL

You have power over your healthcare and your recovery. You are not a victim of heart disease; you **have** heart disease, and now you get to decide what to do about it.

Take control by:

- Reading the Mended HeartGuide® or other patient-focused educational materials.
- Joining The Mended Hearts, Inc. e-newsletter. It provides many updates and resources available to you.
- Following Mended Hearts® or other patient-focused organization websites and social media sites.
- Joining The Mended Hearts Inc. or other patient-focused online communities where patients and caregivers ask questions, get answers, and share information.



2. EDUCATE YOURSELF

Knowledge is power. It gives you the power to become involved and engaged in their care. When you understand your condition and treatment options available to you, you can make informed choices that fit your lifestyle and make changes you are more likely to maintain.

Educate yourself by:

- Having your healthcare provider fully explain your condition and treatment options.
- Asking questions—and keep asking until you understand.
- Asking about resources (online and/or print) to review after you leave the appointment.



3. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

YOU are the top decision-maker when it comes to your health and your body, and you have rights. Know your rights and insist they are respected.

You have the right to:

- Be treated as part of the team
- Ask questions and get answers
- Be heard
- Have easy access to notes and medical records.
- Get a second opinion (and third and fourth)
- Suggest alternatives
- Feel confident in the team
- Change your mind
- Appeal decisions if you don't agree



4. BE PART OF THE TEAM

To be an empowered patient, you must play a role in your healthcare team because you are the person who knows you best. Sometimes patients feel they need to be passive and do what the doctor says, and it is important to follow your treatment plan; however, to be most effective, that treatment plan should include your input, thoughts and suggestions.

Be part of the team by:

- Understanding yourself, your healthcare goals, your preferences and your needs. Take time to consider what YOU want.
- Accepting that you know yourself better than anyone else.
- Speaking up and sharing your feelings, thoughts, preferences and ideas even if you disagree.
- Understanding that most healthcare professionals want you to be engaged and involved.



5. GET INFORMATION

Even if you have educated yourself about your condition and treatment options, you still may need information from your healthcare providers and additional resources to support you on your heart journey.

Some questions you might ask before having surgery or a medical procedure are:

- How often have you performed this procedure
- What is your success rate?
- What is your survival rate? (Note that some hospitals and centers take higher risk patients, and this may not be the most helpful information if that is the case.)
- What is the average recovery time at this hospital? Do patients fully recover
- What complications may occur?
- How does the care team work together, and can I meet everyone on the team?
- What resources are available for me at this hospital?

*Don't be afraid to get a second opinion (or more) until you feel comfortable.

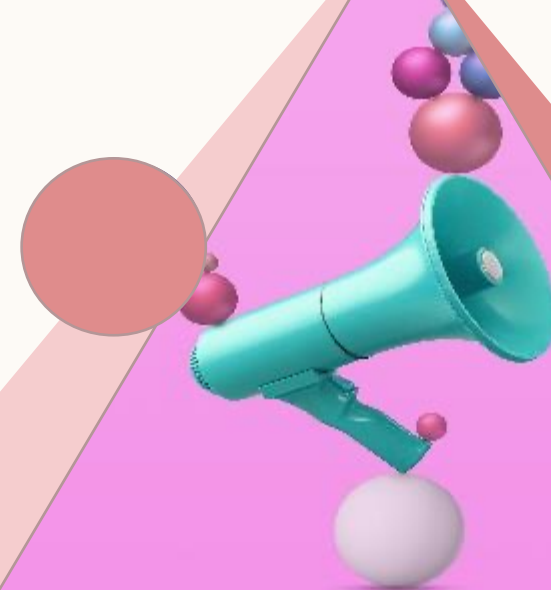


6. VOICE YOUR OPINIONS

Your voice matters. Your story matters. If you are uncomfortable with something, speak up and ask for a solution.

Voice your opinions by:

- Deciding what is important to discuss and who to discuss the issue(s) with.
- Finding the courage to speak up on important issues that impact you.
- Being respectful and courteous in your interactions.
- Asking for a response or for access to any additional information or resources needed.
- Advocating for yourself like you would for a loved one or best friend.
- Getting support.



7. MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS THAT ARE RIGHT FOR YOU

Shared decision-making means that there is ongoing communication between the patient and the person providing care — decisions are made with you and not for you. Through this communication, the patient and provider together decide on treatment.

Common questions patients can ask:

- What are my treatment options?
- What are the risks and benefits of each treatment option?
- Who is the best person to perform this treatment?
- What happens if I choose not to have this treatment?
- How do I find out if I can afford this treatment?
- Will I be able to get the treatment/medication that is being prescribed?
- What kind of lifestyle changes will I have to make?
- What is recovery like for the different treatment options?



SHARED DECISION MAKING



UNDERSTANDING

You understand your condition



TREATMENT OPTIONS

You understand all treatment options available to you



TIME

You have time to consider your options (if possible)



QUESTIONS

You have been able to ask questions and get answers



SUPPORT

You feel supported in your decisions



CONFIDENCE

You are comfortable with and confident in your decisions



“ FIRST STEPS ARE ALWAYS THE HARDEST BUT UNTIL THEY ARE TAKEN THE NOTION OF PROGRESS REMAINS ONLY A NOTION AND NOT AN ACHIEVEMENT. ”

Aberjhani



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POWER TO CHANGE
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www.mendedhearts.org