Minding His Business

No-nagging tips for getting your man to the doctor

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When men don't go to the doctor, it's not always because they're macho; sometimes they just feel unfamiliar with and overwhelmed by the health care system, says Willarda V.Edwards, MD, coauthor with health writer Andrea King Collier of *The Black Woman'sGuide to Black Men's Health* (Warner Wellness; $14). Rather than sit by helplessly as your man procrastinates on checkups or waits until he has a serious problem to see a physician, try these tips to help him take care of himself—without pressuring him or violating his privacy.

BE ENCOURAGING

Gently cajole—but don't badger—him to go to the doctor. He will register that you're demonstrating loving concern for his well-being.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Talk to him about the health care system and how sometimes it can be frustrating. Explain how to find the right doctor, fill prescriptions and get tests and lab work done, and how insurance works. You can also help him set up his appointments. If he's on medication, remind him to take it, or put the pills on the table with his food. He'll recognize that you're trying to assist him.

BE A ROLE MODEL

Eat fewer unhealthy foods, walk and get more exercise, and avoid alcohol and smoking. Be a good example to him, so that both of you can exemplify good health to your children and other loved ones.

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