

# Absolute Advocacy

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As we said before, it's partly your doctor's responsibility to be on top of your health, but you have to do your part too. These five simple tips will help you become your own advocate each time you visit a doctor.

## **Be honest**

Don't withhold information regarding your personal and family medical histories, your sexual activity, any drugs you may use or other medications you take. Keeping details from your health care provider makes it harder for you both to optimize your health.

## **Read**

Doing some homework about HIV and its treatment can make for good conversation with your doctor. The pages of *Real Health* and *POZ*—along with [POZ.com](http://POZ.com) and [realhealthmag.com](http://realhealthmag.com)—are filled with useful information about HIV.

## **Write**

Don't show up to your appointments empty-handed. Bring a notebook filled with any concerns, changes or questions that may have arisen since your last visit. And take notes during your appointment.

## **Get organized**

Keep a folder of any documents your health care provider gives you, including lab reports, drug information, pamphlets or other paperwork. And use a calendar to help remember health care appointments and medication refills—two big no-nos are missing clinic visits and letting your prescriptions lapse.

## **Hire and fire**

Remember, your doc works for you. Make sure your provider treats you with respect and takes your questions and concerns seriously. If not, you might want to consider looking for a new doc. Adequate health care is not a privilege; it is a right.

[Click here](#) to read the digital edition of this *Real Health Focus*

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