



Fall 2010



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Helping Your Doctor Help You

What can you do in the waiting room at the doctor's office before your appointment? You can use that time to help yourself and your doctor.

- ✓ Make sure that the office personnel have your most current information: your name, address, phone number, insurance information, date of birth and advance directives.
- ✓ If you have seen another doctor, been referred by another doctor, have recently been hospitalized or received treatment, make sure you have contact information and dates available. If you are able to get copies of your information before the visit, that is even better.
- ✓ Write down the symptoms that you are having, how they feel, when and how often you are having them.
- ✓ Make sure that you have a list of your current medications. Be sure to include all medications, nonprescription medications, supplements and vitamins. How much do you take and how often do you take them. Your symptoms could be related to reactions or interactions between medications and/or vitamins.
- ✓ Write down the questions you want to ask so you won't forget. How many times do you leave the doctor's office and on the way home think about a question that you forgot to ask?

When you see your doctor . . .

- ✓ Write down the doctor's suggestions or bring someone with you if you are

forgetful or have difficulty hearing or understanding.

- ✓ Ask questions . . .
 - ❓ What is the problem? Can it be resolved?
 - ❓ If tests are recommended, how will the cost be handled?
 - ❓ What will the tests accomplish and will I need to be tested again?
 - ❓ What are the risks or side effects of the tests?
 - ❓ What are the treatment choices?
 - ❓ Is a specialist or second opinion recommended?
 - ❓ How will the cost be handled for medications or treatments?
 - ❓ What are the side effects of the medication or treatment?
 - ❓ What is the expectation of the medications or treatment?
 - ❓ How long are medications or treatment needed?
 - ❓ Will there be pain and/or discomfort, physical limitations or changes?
 - ❓ What if treatment fails?
 - ❓ What if treatment is declined?
 - ❓ Is the disease life threatening or life limiting?

Hospice is a great resource to discuss end-of-life options such as place of care, caregiver education and support, emotional and spiritual concerns, advance directives and preplanning.



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with Anthony Palumbo

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Ellie Winnett Regional Manager

Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette and Suwannee

Responsible for Hospice of the Nature Coast's clinical operations in four Florida counties, Ellie Winnett has strong ties to the local region and the healthcare field.

Having lived in Branford for the past 27 years, she states, "I love the small-town atmosphere so much I cannot imagine living anywhere else." As a registered nurse with a background in home health nursing for 21 years, she previously served as branch manager for a home healthcare services organization in Lake City and Live Oak.

"At Hospice of the Nature Coast, our team is dedicated to providing outstanding care and showing genuine concern as we focus on patient and family needs," she says.



Ernest de Leon, M.D. Medical Director

Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette and Suwannee

As Hospice of the Nature Coast's Medical Director, Dr. Ernest de Leon understands that hospice care is based on more than just medical care. "It's an ideal, and you have to care about that," he asserts, "Hospice is an essential part of end-of-life issues."

This model of excellence inherent in the hospice tradition motivates Dr. de Leon to make those end-of-life issues easier to deal with for both patients and their families. "The dying process itself is very scary for the patient and the family," he explains, "and I believe that hospice should be there for support. We want the patient to be comfortable, we want to make sure that medications are in order, and we want to have all of the proper people and services in place to meet the needs of our patients and their families."

In private practice in Lake City for 18 years and having been medical director of a home healthcare services organization for 10 years, Dr. de Leon has long been familiar with how hospice works and has been a staunch believer in the hospice philosophy. He earned his medical degree at the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines, served his residency at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Youngstown, Ohio, and is a member of the American Board of Family Practice.

– ABOUT US –

Hospice of the Nature Coast, a program of Hospice of Citrus County, Inc., licensed 1985, is a not-for-profit charitable organization providing comprehensively responsive and compassionate end-of-life services to the terminally ill and their families in 12 counties of North Central Florida.