



Prepare for Your Appointment

1. If the most important thing to you about your visit to a doctor is whether they accept your insurance, ask about this first. Rather than taking your time to find an appointment day and time that works for you, always ask when making an appointment if your insurance will be taken. Never assume your doctor accepts your insurance just because they did at your last visit as things may have changed.

Dr. Hoffman is not a member of any network, including Medicare, so you will need to pay for the services at the time of your visit. The office, however, will file a claim for you and you will be reimbursed directly by your insurance company based on the benefits of your plan for an out-of-network doctor. Medicare claims, however, cannot be submitted as Dr. Hoffman has opted out of Medicare and it is therefore illegal to submit claims to Medicare.

2. **Make a List.** It is stressful going to the doctor, so your time spent with the doctor will be more productive if you plan ahead. List the issues that are bringing you to the office that day. Make sure to prioritize them because there may not be time to address all of them in one appointment. Whether or not you bring a list, make sure the doctor knows all your concerns at the beginning of the visit so they can use their time with you as efficiently as possible.
3. **Bring a list of all your medications, including supplements.** Regardless of the specialty of the doctor you are seeing, always make sure to report any health issues you are dealing with. Do not assume, for example, that your podiatrist does not need to know about heart or diabetes problem.
4. **Know the fax number of your pharmacy.** Because of significant phone wait times, and to have written records of your prescriptions, the most efficient way for your doctor to communicate with your pharmacy is via fax.
5. **Feel free to bring someone with you to your appointment.** They can help you understand and remember answers to your questions.
6. **Be honest with the doctor and do not leave out details.** Don't be embarrassed as your doctor has heard it all and will never judge you.
7. **Keep an open mind and do not come in with a fixed idea.** For example, don't say, "I broke my toe and I want an MRI". The doctor will determine if you have a break, and if it merits an X-ray or MRI. Your doctor does not want to expose you

to unnecessary tests or costs. Remember, your job is to come in knowing what your concerns are as specifically as possible. Let the doctor do the rest.

8. **Come with your calendar.** It would be great if you do not need a follow-up visit, but if you do, be prepared to make one before you leave. Many doctors are booked three weeks to months out. The most efficient time to make an appointment is before you leave. Telling staff you don't have a calendar with you only results in more delay for you and extra work for the office. Please do not ask to be "penciled in" and say you will call back to see if that time and day work for you. There are too many patients needing help to temporarily reserve a time for you. Patients come in with all sorts of calendars - electronic ones and a wide variety of paper ones from very small to full size desk calendars.
9. **Be prepared to pay the at the time of the visit.** If you would like to use a credit card, ask the office which they accept. Dr. Hoffman's office accepts MasterCard and Visa only, as well as cash and checks. If your visit reveals a problem that may result in significant cost, do not hesitate to ask Dr. Hoffman to make arrangements to pay over time.
10. **Make sure your insurance card has an address for the provider to send in a claim.** Many doctors do not use intermediaries to file claims for them. Consequently, they depend on you knowing the address for a provider to send a claim to. Usually your insurance card will have a provider claims address on it. But if it does not, call your insurance company prior to your visit and ask for the address for a provider to mail in a claim. Make sure it is for the provider and not you, the patient, as these addresses differ. Note that the provider needs the actual address so do not accept a representative telling you to send the claim to the "local office". You need to have the PO Box or street address for services rendered in Northern California.

If your card does not have your provider claims address on it and you do not know it, Dr. Hoffman's office will complete the claim for you but hold on to it until you provide the address. At that time the claim will be filed for you. When you do find the provider claims address, we suggest you write it on a small note and tape it to the back of your insurance card so it will always be available.