Tips for Talking with your Healthcare Team

Tell your story as accurately as possible:

Keep a record of your symptoms and medical history. For example, if you have a fever and rapid heart rate, what happened before that? Have a cut on your foot from last week? Make sure to let your healthcare team know, even if you think it's insignificant. *The more information your doctor has to work with, the better.*

Ask someone to stay with you when you speak with your doctor:

When you're sick or anxious, it's easy to forget to relay an important detail, or you might not remember instructions your doctor gave. A second person can help you keep track of all the information.

Say, "I'm concerned about sepsis":

If you're concerned about sepsis say it and explain why.

Ask for clarification,

if your doctor or nurse says something you don't understand.

If you are sent for tests, ask what they are for

and when the results will be available. Follow up if you haven't heard back by the time you expected to.

Ask your doctor what you should expect following your diagnosis:

For example, if your doctor says you have a virus, ask how long it should typically be before you start feeling better. Ask what you might expect and what signs or symptoms to watch for that may indicate that you are getting worse, not better.

If you have prescribed medications, ask what they are for,

what they are supposed to do, and when you should start seeing their effects. Ask your pharmacist if there is anything specific you should watch for with the medications, including side effects.

Keep your own records:

Write down what was said and what you did. If you must return to your doctor or you go to a clinic or emergency department, you have this information at your fingertips.

Get a second opinion if you feel that you are not getting better:

If you are worried that you have sepsis, seek a second opinion as quickly as possible.