

## Volume 15 - Issue 3, 2015 - Cover Story

### Patient Power Infographic

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#### Nothing about me without me

##### An empowered activated patient:

- Understands their health condition and its effect on their body.
- Feels able to participate in decision-making with their healthcare professionals
- Feels able to make informed choices about treatment.
- Understands the need to make necessary changes to their lifestyle for managing their condition.
- Is able to challenge and ask questions of the healthcare professionals providing their care.
- Takes responsibility for their health and actively seeks care only when necessary
- Actively seeks out, evaluates and makes use of information.

##### Top 5 Traits of Empowered Patients

- Responsibility: this includes collaborating with their healthcare providers to make decisions, researching treatment options, preparing for appointments and so on.
- Use common sense: this includes making an assessment of what care is being recommended because it CAN be done vs what SHOULD be done, sticking up for themselves when necessary (eg asking the doctor if they have washed their hands before the examination)
- Collaborative: reach decisions together with the healthcare professional
- Trust, but verify: for example, questions the need for tests or imaging exams (Choosing Wisely), uses trusted online sources.
- Use Technology to Gather Information

##### 8 Ways to Empower Patients

1. Begin with empathy: openly acknowledge their emotional states, especially when they are difficult. Encourage patients to ask questions.
2. Knowledge is power – enable access to medical records, patient portals. Provide a list of trusted, authoritative online information portals.
3. Remind patients that they are at the centre of their own healthcare: coach them to be engaged consumers rather than passive recipients, and find power in the role. Arriving at appointments armed with information such as a list of all current medications, supplements, and regimens, as well as an up-to-date history of previous visits and procedures can help them feel in control.
4. Make shared decision-making the easy choice for clinicians
5. Groups of patients are a powerful asset
6. Listen to what patients have to say
7. Encourage patients to engage with social media: Find out what channels are available where you work and personally invite your patients to participate. Social media can also be a powerful way for patients to connect with others in similar situations.
8. Actively welcome and encourage patient empowerment: If you praise them for their efforts and actively listen to their opinions and concerns, you're likely to find them willing and enthusiastic partners in treatment going forward .

Published on : Tue, 6 Oct 2015