



# Managing Differences of Opinion

Differences of opinion between patients and clinicians happen. These types of interactions can help foster a positive relationship or can lead to a rift between the parties, eroding the trust and confidence that both require. Learning how to manage some of the more common areas of disagreement can help de-escalate or even avoid high tension in the office and allow you to *provide better patient care.*

## Patients who want to be tested for a particular disease:



**Patient:** "I want you to test me for [disease X]." **or** "Can you order [test X]?"



**Clinician:** "What makes you concerned about [disease X]?" **or** "How do you think [test X] would be helpful?"

## Patients who want antibiotics when they are not medically indicated:



**Patient:** "The antibiotics are the only things that work. I need to continue taking them or I'll find another doctor."



**Clinician:** "In what way do the antibiotics help? What improvements have you seen?"

Then, "What if we try [x] for the next 2 weeks instead of the antibiotics? You can use a symptom diary to document your days, and then come back and talk about how you've been feeling. Do you think that's enough time?"

## Helping patients manage expectations:



**Clinician:** "We've ruled out [list conditions that have been tested for], so that's reassuring."

I appreciate you bringing back the symptom diary, and I see you've had some good and bad days. I know there will continue to be some bad days, but what do you think is the next step to try and get more good days?"

"I know you've tried a lot of different medications for your brain fog. We've had some success, but I hear you that you're still suffering. How do you feel about seeing a neurologist, to see if there's anything we've missed or a treatment that I don't know about?"

"I want you to be aware that even specialists can struggle to find the right combination of therapies, so try not to be disappointed if they don't have answers right away."

Our knowledge about Infection-Associated Chronic Illness (IACI) is incomplete. It is important to remind patients that research is ongoing, and we may need to adjust our care plans as we learn more.

