

When Your Concerns Are Not Taken Seriously



For a long time, Black mothers have experienced inequities in maternity care, including having symptoms and concerns underestimated, dismissed, or attributed to factors other than a potentially serious medical problem. At the same time, Black patients can experience heightened surveillance in some areas, such as drug testing or assumptions about substance use, while their reports of pain, symptoms, or changes in how they feel may not receive the same urgency. Clinical attention is not always applied fairly,

consistently, and based on the person's actual symptoms and medical needs. You should not have to become more sick, more distressed, or have more persistent symptoms before your concerns are taken seriously.

You Don't Have to Know the Diagnosis

You're the expert of your body, but you don't have to walk into an emergency room saying, "I have preeclampsia." You probably don't have access to running all of your own medical tests. So, you can't actually diagnose yourself. You have to depend on medical providers to do all of the clinical care for you.

You can say something like: *"I'm ___ weeks pregnant, and I have a severe headache and vision changes. This is not normal for me. I would like to be evaluated."*

You don't have to diagnose a blood clot. You can say, *"One of my legs is suddenly swollen and painful and I just gave birth ___ days ago. I would like to be evaluated."*

You can also ask:

- "What are you considering as possible causes?"
- "What are you doing to rule out something serious?"
- "What testing would help determine what is happening?"
- "If you're not concerned, can you explain why?"
- "What is the most in-depth test you could run to evaluate me and why aren't you opting for it?"
- "What should I watch for if I go home?"
- "If you're concerned about one possibility, what other causes are you considering?"

♥ **Sis, Your Symptoms Deserve Assessment.**
You don't need to convince someone that you are "sick enough" to deserve evaluation.



Village Tip: If she expresses concerns about a symptom, take her seriously. Encourage her to contact her healthcare provider rather than dismissing how she feels.



Ask that all interactions be documented in your chart. Your visit may be A.I. transcribed.