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# Image via [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-holding-horse-s-fface-3573134/)

# **Vital Steps to Becoming Your Best Health Advocate**

Navigating today's healthcare environment demands more than just following a doctor's advice. It calls for you to be the captain of your own healthcare ship. This article from [Harness Horseman's Association of New England](https://hhane.com/) serves as your compass, guiding you through several critical areas.

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## **Live a Healthier Lifestyle**

Your day-to-day choices significantly influence your long-term health. From what you eat to how much you move and [the quality of your sleep](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene/healthy-sleep-tips), crafting a balanced life is crucial. Integrate simple yet effective habits like incorporating more greens in your diet, eating healthier energy-boosting snacks, committing to daily physical activity, and ensuring you get enough restorative sleep. Your body and mind will thank you.

## **Become an Informed Patient**

Instead of solely relying on your doctor to provide all the answers, seize the reins by becoming a well-informed patient. Understanding your medical conditions, potential treatments, and medication side effects equips you to discuss your health more effectively with healthcare providers. Utilize reputable online resources and patient advocacy groups to broaden your knowledge. Always go to appointments [armed with questions](https://www.conwaymedicalcenter.com/news/the-top-10-questions-you-should-ask-your-primary-care-doctor/) and don’t hesitate to dig deeper; your health is too vital to leave to others.

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## **Demystify the Insurance Maze**

Don’t let insurance jargon and fine print confuse you. It's your right and responsibility to understand the coverage you have. Make sure to read through your policy carefully and consult your insurance company for clarification on terms and conditions. Knowing the extent of your coverage can prevent unpleasant surprises and empower you to make wise healthcare choices. This is especially important for freelancers, since you might not necessarily have a company or an HR department that you can turn to for assistance, making it all the more vital that you [understand your rights and coverage](https://www.zenbusiness.com/freelance-health-insurance-guide/) well.

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## **Embrace Prevention**

Prevention is always better than cure, and regular screenings, vaccinations, and check-ups are your first line of defense against health complications. These appointments [offer a snapshot of your health](https://www.tenethealth.com/healthy-living/corporate-content/top-10-health-screenings) and can highlight potential issues before they escalate. By maintaining an ongoing dialogue with your healthcare provider, you can tailor your preventive care to your specific health risks and needs. Make it a priority to schedule and attend these vital health checkpoints; your future self will thank you.

## **Keep a Video Journal**

Keeping a video journal offers numerous mental health benefits, including providing a safe outlet for expressing thoughts and emotions. It allows for self-reflection and tracking personal growth over time, making it easier to identify patterns and work through challenges. Utilizing online video editing tools, such as a [free video maker](https://www.adobe.com/express/create/video), can help you easily craft and organize your entries. This creative process not only enhances the quality of your videos but also adds an extra layer of engagement and satisfaction, contributing to overall well-being.

## **Maintain Organized Medical Records**

Imagine walking into a doctor's office and having all your medical information — diagnoses, treatments, medication, surgeries — at your fingertips. [Maintaining meticulous records](https://www.denverpost.com/2020/04/12/how-to-digitize-important-documents/) not only provides a complete narrative of your health journey but also aids healthcare providers in offering the most personalized care. In today’s digital age, various apps and platforms can help you efficiently organize this information..

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## **Get a Second Opinion**

Don't underestimate the power of a second (or third) opinion. Healthcare is complex and continually evolving; what one doctor suggests might not be the only solution. Inform your primary physician that [you’re seeking additional viewpoints](https://www.loyolamedicine.org/about-us/blog/getting-medical-second-opinion-with-doctor). This can offer you a fuller picture of your health status and available treatment options, enabling you to make a more informed decision.

## **Be the CEO of Your Health**

Last, but certainly not least, you should be the ultimate decision-maker when it comes to your healthcare. Whether deciding on a specific treatment, choosing a healthcare provider, or making lifestyle changes, you have the final say. [So be assertive](https://uconnruddcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2909/2020/07/How-to-Be-Informed-and-Assertive-1.pdf), ask questions, and demand the best care because when it comes to your health, you’re the CEO.

Owning your healthcare journey is not a luxury – these days, it’s a necessity! Taking charge of these critical areas not only makes you an informed patient but a powerful advocate for your well-being. So discuss your health effectively with professionals, live a life that nurtures your physical and mental well-being, embrace prevention, demystify the insurance maze to make empowered choices, get a second opinion when necessary, keep your medical records organized, and above all, be the CEO of your own health.

***To learn more about harness horse racing at Plainridge, visit the*** [***Harness Horseman’s Association of New England***](https://hhane.com/) ***website today or follow on Facebook ~ Harness Horseman's Association of New England!***