

AI in the Exam Room - Quick Start Guide

AI IN THE EXAM ROOM

Quick Start Guide for Patients

START HERE

This is your quick reference for using AI safely for health information.

For detailed information, see the complete curriculum or Master Reference Guide.

THE ONE PRINCIPLE YOU NEED

AI is for information and preparation, NOT diagnosis and treatment.

Use AI to prepare for medical care ✓

Use AI to avoid medical care ✗

THE FIVE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Ask these EVERY TIME you use AI for health:

- 1. “What are you basing this on?”** → Look for specific sources you can verify
 - 2. “What can you NOT detect remotely?”** → This reveals what AI is missing about your situation → **Most important question - it has saved lives**
 - 3. “What would require emergency evaluation?”** → Get specific red flags to watch for
 - 4. “What are you uncertain about?”** → Test if AI acknowledges limitations
 - 5. “What should I ask my actual doctor?”** → Prepare for physician consultation
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WHEN TO CALL 911 (Not ask AI)

Call 911 immediately if you have:

Heart/Chest: - Chest pain + sweating, shortness of breath, or nausea
- Pain radiating to arm, jaw, or back - Symptoms lasting more than 15 minutes

Brain/Nerves: - FAST signs (Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty) - "Worst headache of my life" - Sudden vision loss or confusion - Seizure

Breathing: - Can't speak in full sentences - Blue/gray lips or face - Gasping for air

Belly: - Severe pain + fever - Vomiting blood - Rigid abdomen

Children: - Infant < 3 months with fever - Difficulty breathing - Not responding normally - **Trust your parental instinct**

Back Pain + Any of: - Bowel/bladder problems - Numbness in groin/inner thighs - Leg weakness

If in doubt about emergency → Call 911

Don't ask AI if it's an emergency. If you're worried enough to ask, call 911.

GOOD AI USE vs BAD AI USE

✓ GOOD USES (These are safe and helpful):

Education - "I was diagnosed with diabetes. Help me understand what this means." - "Explain how insulin works."

Medication Information - "I was prescribed metformin. What are the side effects?" - "Does this interact with ibuprofen?"

Appointment Preparation - "What questions should I ask my doctor about my headaches?" - "What information would help evaluate chest pain?"

Understanding Instructions - "My doctor said 'modify my diet.' What does that mean for diabetes?" - "How do I take this medication correctly?"

General Learning - "How does blood pressure work?" - "What is cholesterol?"

✗ BAD USES (These are dangerous):

Diagnosis - "I have chest pain. What do I have?" → ✗ See doctor instead - "Is this rash cancer?" → ✗ See doctor instead

Triage Decisions - "Do I need to see a doctor?" → ✗ When in doubt, go - "Is this serious enough for ER?" → ✗ If worried, call 911

Treatment - "What should I take for this?" → ✗ See doctor instead - "How do I treat this?" → ✗ See doctor instead

Medication Changes - "Can I stop taking this?" → ✗ Ask your doctor - "Can I change my dose?" → ✗ Ask your doctor

Avoiding Care - Using AI instead of doctor appointments → ✗ Keep appointments - Believing "it's probably nothing" → ✗ If worried, get checked

THE VELOCIRAPTOR TEST

"Would I notice this symptom while running from a velociraptor?"

If YES → Probably significant. Seek care.

If NO → Might be minor. Can monitor.

Trust Your Gut:

Your body: Debugged by 3.8 billion years of evolution

AI: Trained on text

When they conflict: Trust your body. Every time.

If something feels wrong, even if AI says it's probably nothing → get it checked.

SPOTTING AI HALLUCINATION

Red Flags (AI might be making things up):

- Never says "I don't know"
- Vague sources ("studies show")
- Overly specific without caveats
- Perfect confidence about everything
- Can't explain reasoning
- Internal contradictions

If you see 3+ red flags:

Don't trust this information. Verify with doctor or reputable sources.

WHAT AI CANNOT DO

AI cannot: - Examine you physically - Measure your vital signs - See how sick you look - Run tests - Detect skin color changes - Assess your breathing - Distinguish between similar conditions - Make diagnosis - Know your complete medical history - Take responsibility for wrong advice

AI has 0 sensors. You have 10 billion.

That's why AI cannot replace doctors.

VERIFICATION CHECKLIST

Before acting on AI health advice:

- Check sources (are they specific and verifiable?)
- Cross-reference with reputable sites (Mayo Clinic, NIH, CDC)
- Ask the Five Essential Questions
- Test for hallucination red flags
- When in doubt → confirm with doctor

Never act on AI medical advice without verification.

DECISION FLOWCHART

Have symptoms? → Emergency symptoms? → **CALL 911** → Concerning symptoms? → **SEE DOCTOR** (use AI to prepare) → Minor symptoms? → Use AI for education, **but see doctor if worried**

Want information? → About diagnosed condition? → ✓ **Good AI use** → About prescribed medication? → ✓ **Good AI use** → To prepare for appointment? → ✓ **Good AI use** → General health education? → ✓ **Good AI use**

Trying to decide? → If should see doctor? → **Default: GO** → What treatment to take? → ✗ **See doctor instead** → Whether to take medication? → ✗ **Ask your doctor**

THE ULTIMATE TEST

Ask yourself:

“Am I using AI to prepare for medical care or to avoid it?”

PREPARE ✓ This is appropriate

AVOID ✗ This is dangerous

WHEN IN DOUBT

Default Rules:

Emergency concern? → Call 911

Need diagnosis? → See doctor

AI conflicts with gut? → Trust gut

“Probably nothing”? → Get checked if worried

Treatment decision? → Consult physician

Uncertain? → Seek medical evaluation

Remember:

Better to go for nothing than die at home.

ER doctors would rather see you for a false alarm than have you delay care for real emergency.

KEEP THIS HANDY

Print and keep visible:

- Five Essential Questions Card
- Red Flags Quick Reference
- This Quick Start Guide

Use them every time you consult AI about health.

YOU’VE GOT THIS

You now know: - When to use AI (education, preparation) - When NOT to use AI (diagnosis, treatment) - What questions to ask - When to seek medical care - How to verify information - How to trust your gut

Use AI safely. Ask questions. Verify information. Trust your body.

Your life might depend on it.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

See complete resources: - Master Reference Guide (comprehensive summary) - Individual module content (detailed learning) - Patient Preparation Worksheet (for appointments) - All reference cards and checklists

For emergencies: - 911 (Emergency services) - 988 (Suicide prevention) - 1-800-222-1222 (Poison control)

Reputable health information: - Mayo Clinic: mayoclinic.org - NIH/MedlinePlus: medlineplus.gov - CDC: cdc.gov

From: AI in the Exam Room - Patient Education Curriculum

Teaching patients to use AI safely and effectively in healthcare.

Remember: AI is a tool for information, not a substitute for medical care.

Information to enhance human care ✓

Information to replace human care ✗