

15 Ways to Confuse, Demoralize, and Frustrate Your Emergency Physician

When you are a patient in a busy ED, getting your doctor's best effort in caring for you can be difficult. Most ED physicians only have a couple of minutes to obtain their [history and physical](#) exam. It is increasingly important for you to stand out from the crowd by making the ED physician as confused and uncomfortable as possible so that they may give you their full and undivided attention and minimize the risk of medical errors.

Simply follow these 15 guidelines to ensure that your ED physician will experience some combination of bafflement, frustration, and anxiety. Soon, you will be well on your way to mistake-free treatment bliss:



- Complain of feeling “dizzy.” When asked to clarify, state that you are “lightheaded.” When asked to further clarify, state you are “dizzy.” Continue in this manner until your physician gives up and admits you.
- When asked if you smoke, state “No.” When asked if you previously smoked, say “Yes.” When asked when you quit, say “30 minutes ago.”
- Describe the time course of all of your complaints as “a good while.” Refuse to elaborate.
- Insist on always being given regular strength [Tylenol](#) for your chronic pain. Refuse everything else.
- Place a sufficient amount of your non-edible belongings in a fast food bag. Then check in with abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting while conspicuously holding the bag.
- If you are female, complain of pelvic pain. Refuse a pelvic exam. Insist on a rectal exam.
- Ask your attending emergency physician what they plan on specializing in

when they finish their training.

- Complain of having so much diarrhea for the last 2 days that you couldn't even get off the toilet long enough to fill a glass with water. While in the ER, be unable to provide a stool sample no matter how long you are there. Get mad when you don't have a diagnosis for your diarrhea.
- Have a friend open a laptop or tablet to "healthgrades.com." Make it obvious that the doctor can see the screen. Have your friend ask the doctor to repeat his or her name and type it into the form. Occasionally during the interview, have your friend look at the doctor, sigh, and start typing.
- Insist you have an allergy to a random antibiotic stating the allergy is that you are uncomfortable around pink, white, and brown pills.
- Check in with altered mental status and lethargy. Have friends confirm you are not at baseline. Allow the entire physical exam to occur while acting sleepy, refusing to talk, or follow commands. When the doctor is walking out the door, ask politely if you could have a [turkey sandwich](#).
- Insist on being admitted to a non-private room. Demand a roommate who is at least 5'9", has black hair, weighs between 200 and 230 lbs, has brown eyes and a penchant for rice cakes.
- Put some chocolate pudding into a sterile emesis basin. Place the basin inside an empty bedside commode. Proceed to eat the pudding out of the commode as your doctor is walking in.
- Insist on having your physician call each specialist who cares for you for your various conditions. Insist that a physician admit you for a condition outside of their specialty.
- Complain of chest pain. When asked where your pain is, point to your groin.

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