

# Navigating the Future of Care: Essential Questions to Ask Your Doctor About AI

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## Abstract

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## Navigating the Future of Care: Essential Questions to Ask Your Doctor About AI

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into healthcare is rapidly transforming clinical practice, from diagnostics and treatment planning to administrative efficiency. For patients, this technological shift introduces a new layer of complexity and opportunity. While AI promises to enhance the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of healthcare services by providing accurate, timely, and personalized information [1], it also raises critical questions about data privacy, clinical transparency, and the human element of care. As AI-powered tools become more common in the examination room, it is essential for patients to engage in **shared decision-making** by understanding and questioning the role of these technologies in their personal health journey.

This professional and academic guide outlines the key questions every patient should be prepared to ask their healthcare provider about the use of AI in their care, ensuring they remain an informed and empowered participant in their medical journey.

### 1. Questions on Data Privacy and Security

The use of AI often involves the collection and analysis of vast amounts of patient data, sometimes through new technologies like "ambient scribes" that record doctor-patient conversations [2]. Understanding how your information is handled is paramount, as the sheer volume of data processed by AI systems introduces new vectors for privacy concerns.

| Area of Concern | Essential Questions to Ask Your Doctor | | :--- | :--- | | **Data Storage & Access** | Where will my intake data and conversation transcripts be stored? Who has access to this information, and under what security

protocols? | | **Third-Party Use** | Which third parties will have access to my personal information, and for what purpose (e.g., marketing, research, training AI models)? Can I opt-out of this sharing? | | **De-identification** | Can I control whether my de-identified data is used for other purposes? How long is my data kept in this system, and what is the process for its eventual destruction? | | **Consent & Opt-Out** | Can I decline the use of an ambient scribe or other AI-powered recording tools during my visit without affecting the quality of my care? |

It is crucial to remember that while data de-identification is a common practice, it is **not anonymization**. Once data is stripped of personally identifying information, it may no longer be protected under regulations like HIPAA, allowing it to be bought and sold in the data industry [2]. Patients have a right to understand the scope of acceptable use for their health information and the potential for commercialization of their data.

## **2. Questions on Clinical Decision-Making and Transparency**

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AI is increasingly being used in **clinical decision-making** to assist with remote monitoring, computerized interpretation of medical images (like X-rays or ECGs), and facilitating diagnosis and prognosis [1]. These tools, which can perform equally or better than humans in certain tasks, are designed to reduce human error and provide faster, more reliable diagnoses [1]. However, the patient must understand the level of human oversight and the concept of "explainable AI" (XAI).

***Is an AI tool being used to assist in my diagnosis or treatment plan? If so, what is the name of the tool and what is its intended function? What specific data or evidence did the AI use to reach its conclusion?*** Can the system provide a clear, understandable rationale for its recommendation? ***Will a human clinician review the AI-generated recommendation for accuracy before it is applied to my care? What is the process for overriding an AI recommendation? Where can I view the notes or transcripts generated by the AI, and how can I submit corrections if I find mistakes?*** Accuracy in the electronic health record is vital for future care.

The concept of **shared decision-making** is central to modern medicine. When AI is involved, this means the doctor must be able to clearly explain the AI's input, the human interpretation, and the final decision, ensuring the patient remains an active participant in their care. The physician's role shifts from sole decision-maker to an interpreter and validator of AI-generated insights.

## **3. Questions on Ethical Implications and Accountability**

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The introduction of AI into clinical practice brings with it complex ethical and legal questions, particularly concerning accountability for errors and the potential for algorithmic bias. AI models are trained on historical data, which may inadvertently contain biases that lead to disparities in care for certain demographic groups.

***How was the AI model used in my care validated? Was it tested on a diverse patient population that includes people like me? What is the protocol if the AI system makes an error that negatively impacts my health? Who is ultimately accountable for the outcome—the doctor, the hospital, or the AI developer? How does the use of AI affect the cost of my care? Are there additional fees associated with the use of these advanced tools?***

*Addressing these questions is not just about personal safety; it is about advocating for a more equitable and trustworthy healthcare system. Transparency in the development and deployment of AI is a prerequisite for patient trust.*

#### ***4. Questions on AI's Role in Treatment and Self-Management***

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*Beyond the initial diagnosis, AI is also being deployed to enhance treatment adherence and enable patient self-management. AI-powered applications can provide personalized and customized information, offer educational guidance, and help patients manage chronic conditions like diabetes or hypertension through reminders and coaching [1]. These tools empower patients but also require a new level of digital literacy.*

**What are the benefits and risks of using this AI-powered self-management tool? How often does the AI tool communicate with my doctor, and what information is shared? Is this AI tool a regulated "Software as a Medical Device" (SaMD), and what evidence supports its effectiveness?**

For more in-depth analysis on the ethical, regulatory, and practical implications of AI in healthcare, the resources at [www.rasitdinc.com] (<https://www.rasitdinc.com>) provide expert commentary and professional insight into the digital health landscape. Understanding the broader context of AI adoption is key to asking the most informed questions during your next appointment.

#### **Conclusion: Empowering the Patient in the Digital Age**

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The future of healthcare is a collaborative one, where human expertise is augmented by artificial intelligence. While AI offers tremendous potential for more effective and efficient care, the responsibility for ethical implementation and transparent communication rests with healthcare providers. The patient's role is to be an active, informed participant. By asking these essential questions—about data, transparency, ethics, and self-management—patients move from passive recipients of care to **empowered, informed stakeholders** in the digital health revolution. This proactive approach ensures that technology serves to enhance, rather than diminish, the person-centered nature of the doctor-patient relationship, securing a future where care is both technologically advanced and deeply human.

## **References**

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