

To my patients:

ChatGPT, Google, and AI are not correct 100% of the time. And neither am I.

ChatGPT and the internet are a great way to understand medical terminology, have questions for your physician, and act as a starting point for learning and having a meaningful discussion with your physician. As I have noticed patients using this more, I decided to ask ChatGPT about this. Since many patients have turned to AI, why can't I?

ChatGPT Prompt: "Should (and how) can patients use ChatGPT when consulting with physicians?"

When It's Helpful for a Patient to Bring Up ChatGPT-Based Information:

- **Empowered patients are good:** It's healthy for patients to be curious, learn, and ask questions.
- **Second opinions can lead to better care:** ChatGPT may bring up something the doctor didn't and could be worth exploring.
- **Good doctors welcome informed discussions:** A conversation about alternative options can build trust and improve outcomes.

Where Problems Can Arise:

- **ChatGPT may suggest non-standard or incorrect options:** What sounds reasonable on the web might not be evidence-based or applicable to your specific case.
- **Doctors may feel their expertise is being challenged:** Especially if the conversation turns confrontational or implies distrust.
- **Risk of misinformation:** Without medical training, it's easy to misinterpret ChatGPT, especially in complex or nuanced cases.
- **Information overload & "paralysis from analysis":** Trying to obtain and synthesize literally *all* available information can be overwhelming and confusing for patients. This can cause fear of making a "wrong decision" and inaction/inability to decide.

Recommended Best Practices for Patients:

- **Be open, but respectful:** Say things like, "I read about [X], could that be relevant to my case?"
- **Ask:** If a doctor disagrees with something you read, ask why. Also understand that it just may not apply to you/your case.
- **Use ChatGPT as a supplement, not a substitute:** It can help you prepare questions, not provide final answers.

Some patients mistrust the medical system, have endless access to information, desire control in an anxiety inducing experience, and want to customize their own healthcare. And they can't decide whether the physician or the internet is correct. I completely understand this.

If you feel a doctor is dismissive of your concerns and/or doesn't explain the reasoning, it's fully appropriate to seek a second opinion — not from ChatGPT or Google, but from another qualified professional.

Being a patient in the internet age has many new factors to contend with, where patients often come with partial knowledge, heightened fears, and expectations shaped by Google or AI instead of clinical judgment or experience. *Being an advocate and partner in your care is essential, but self-directing your own care can be a slippery slope.*

From my standpoint as a physician, practicing medicine in this era also has new complexities and implications as well related to the internet (patient review websites, WebMD and medical information sites, etc.). This can lead to feelings of being devalued, mistrusted, disconnected, and emotionally fatigued by having to justify the expertise I've spent nearly 30 years of my life building.

I became a physician to help people and partner with patients, not to debate Chat GPT or Google. However, having fully experienced this from *both sides* and understanding the new era we are in, I am continually committed to adapting and evolving how I care for my patients, as well as for myself as the treating physician. I'm confident in the urologic advice I recommend and care I give. If you're not comfortable with my approach, I respect that — and I understand if you wish to seek another provider who better fits your preferences.

Grant Disick, M.D.