

# Don't Blame The Patients For Long Wait Times

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Dr. Anthony Youn, a plastic surgeon practicing in Detroit [places most of the blame](#) [1] for long office waiting times at the feet of the patients themselves. He comes up with three general categories; patients who arrive late for their appointments, emergencies that require the physician to leave the office, and “oh by-the-way” scenarios:

“Here is a typical scenario: It’s the end of a 10-minute office visit, scheduled as a follow-up for high blood pressure. It’s been 12 minutes, the patient has her prescriptions, and the visit is concluding ... The doctor begins to open the door and step out. ‘Oh, doctor, by the way, I forgot to tell you. I had chest pain last night and passed out in the bathtub. And I have bloody diarrhea.’”

Yes, patients can and do many wondrous things. If they did these things in a professional role we would call their behavior negligent, manipulative, deceptive, non-compliant, selfish, entitled, in-denial, aggressive, and incompetent. But they’re not professionals. They are flawed humans in a very vulnerable and dependent situation in their lives. I don’t expect perfect behavior from my patients. Despite numerous appointment reminders and rules and requirements posted throughout the office there is a constant number who arrive late and forget to bring their medications. This is the nature of the game and is unlikely to change anytime soon.

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**Links:**

[1] [http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/07/health/youn-doctor-wait/index.html?hpt=he\\_c2](http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/07/health/youn-doctor-wait/index.html?hpt=he_c2)

[2] <http://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2012/09/blame-patients-long-wait-times.html>