# How To Talk To Your Doctor?

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Doctors may not be familiar with how the law defines disability under the ADA. For instance, the doctor may believe that a person is only disabled if that person is unable to work. It may be helpful to give your doctor some basic information about disability law and the types of conditions that might qualify as disabilities. Doctors do not need to make legal conclusions about whether you are protected under the ADA or FEHA, they need only to **document your condition and how it affects your activities**.

If you received accommodations during law school, you are already familiar with asking your doctor or diagnostician to complete accommodations requests. At University of California law schools, students requesting accommodations use Disability Documentation forms. These forms give treating doctors or diagnosticians an opportunity to read about the ADA and provide them an opportunity to explain how a specified impairment affects a particular student. These forms are often sufficient for your law school, but **generally do not provide the level of specificity required to request accommodations on the bar exam or MPRE**. Instead, look at the [**Forms**](https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Admissions/Examinations/Requesting-Testing-Accommodations) the California State Bar requires, and at the MPRE's [**Medical Documentation Guidelines**](http://www.ncbex.org/exams/mpre/ada-accommodations/documentation-guidelines/), and bring the relevant form/guideline with you to give to your doctor/medical expert.

Remember that most doctors have not taken the bar or professional responsibility exams. It will be helpful to give details about how the exams work. The more the doctor knows about the format of the bar exam and the MPRE, the better prepared the doctor is in evaluating your limitations and needs in the context of the exams.

Give your doctor as much information as he/she/they need to complete the forms, even if it means volunteering information the doctor may already know. You may wish to give your doctor a copy of the narrative you will submit as part of your request for accommodations, so your doctor has insight into how you experience your disability.

If you take medication the doctor should evaluate whether the medication might impact your ability to take the exam.﻿ For example, you may take medication to alleviate – mitigate – pain. Under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, a person’s disability must be evaluated without regard to mitigating measures. The fact that your medication controls some of your symptoms is not something that should be considered in deciding whether you are disabled. However, the medication itself may cause other functional limitations in a test-taking environment. If the medication causes excessive fatigue or impairs your ability to focus or type, the doctor should explain that in the documentation.

You should also consider consulting with an expert in the field for your type of disability. The State Bar of California expects to see their forms filled out by an expert or specialist, not your primary care physician who is a generalist. The expert can help determine whether your medical and other supporting documentation is adequate and appropriate for the type of accommodations you’re seeking. The expert may also wish to write you an opinion, which you may submit with your petition. This will give the Committee a more complete picture of your disability and how it impacts you on an exam.

**If you think you might need accommodations for the bar and need assistance with the process, please contact the Disability Resource Program by emailing**[**DisabilityResourceProgram@uchastings.edu**](mailto:DisabilityResourceProgram@uchastings.edu)**.**

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