

# Top tips to get the most out of your GP Appointment

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Appointment

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## GP Appointment

A face-to-face appointment isn't the only way to see your GP. Appointments include an email via MY GP App, telephone call or video.

## What to ask your doctor

Whether it is your initial GP Appointments, a consultation with a specialists at an outpatient appointment or a mental health assessment there are a few things you can prepare in advance that will help you to get the most out of time with the health professional.

Make some notes things you want to discuss or that you should remember to tell your doctor, such as a list of medicines you use. Take those notes with you on the day and then tick each point off during your appointment.

Do not be afraid to ask questions about things you find unclear. Let the health professional explain it to you until you are sure you understand it. If you like, take someone with you as support.

Below we have listed some example questions that you may find useful.

## Checklist of questions to ask at your appointment.

Tests, such as blood tests or scans

- What are the tests for?
- How and when will I get the results?
- Who do I contact if I do not get the results?

Treatment

- Are there other ways to treat my condition?
- What do you recommend?
- Are there any side effects or risks? If so, what are they?
- How long will I need treatment for?
- How will I know if the treatment is working?
- How effective is this treatment?
- What will happen if I do not have any treatment?
- Is there anything I should stop or avoid doing?
- Is there anything I can do to help myself?

What next

- What happens next?
- Do I need to come back and see you? If so, when?
- Who do I contact if things go worse?
- Do you have any written information?
- Where can I go for more information?
- Is there a support group or any other source of help?

## Top Tips

### Before your appointment

- Write down your 2 or 3 most important questions.
- List or bring all your medicines and pills - including vitamins and supplements.
- Write down details of your symptoms, including when they started and what makes them better or worse.
- Ask your hospital or surgery for an interpreter or communication support if needed.
- Ask a friend or family member to come with you if you like.

## Four other key questions

Think about these questions to help you make better decisions about your healthcare. This is all about shared decision making between you and your GP/Consultant or other healthcare professional. Have these questions with you at your appointment they can help you make a shared decision.

### Ask

- What are the benefits? Make sure you understand the benefits to your health if you agree to the procedure/treatments.
- What are the risks? You should be fully informed about the effects of this decision, both short and long term. Take time to consider your care after your treatment and how you will manage this.
- Are there any alternatives? Ensure you are aware of all the options, so you can decide if a different option better suits your healthcare needs?
- What if I do nothing? Remember that just because treatment is available, it doesn't mean it's right for you. Make sure you fully understand the impact on your health if you do nothing and the effect of time on your condition.

## During your appointment

- Do not be afraid to ask if you do not understand. For example: "Can you say that again? I still do not understand."
- If you do not understand any words, ask for them to be written down and explained.
- Write things down or ask a family member or friend to take notes.

## Before you leave your appointment

### Check:

- You have covered everything on your list.
- You understand, for example: "Can I just check I understood what you said?"
- You know what should happen next - and when. Write it down.

Ask

- Who to contact if you have any more problems or questions.
- About support groups and where to go for reliable information.
- For copies of letters written about you - you're entitled to see these.

Ask:

- Write down what you discussed and what happens next. Keep your notes.
- Book any tests that you can and put the dates in your diary.

Ask

- What happens if I'm not sent my appointment details?
- Can I have the results of any tests? If you do not get the results when you expect - ask for them. Ask what the results mean.

### Digital Appointments

If your appointment is via the telephone always make sure

- Have all your information, any questions you want to ask ready, and a notepad and pen to record anything.
- Test that your phone is working well and that your volume is on high so you can hear the Doctor.
- Make sure you are also in a quiet place so that you can hear the conversation.

If your appointment is a video consultation always make sure that you:

- Test your technology e.g., computer, phone, iPad, tablet or another device that you may be using.
- Make sure that you are in an area with a decent internet signal.
- Check that your camera lens is clean, and microphone is working well.
- During your consultation with the Dr make sure that your microphone isn't on mute and that the Doctor can hear you clearly.
- Make sure you are also in a quiet place so that you can hear the conversation.

Write your questions that you want to ask your GP:

1.....

2.....

3.....

Notes



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