



It's okay to ask!

Getting the most out of your health care appointments

We want you to play an active part in your care and treatment. To help you, here are some useful tips and questions you could ask to make sure you get the most out of your appointments.

Before your appointment

You might find it helpful to prepare for your appointment. Here are some tips on what to do before you go.

- **Write down your two or three most important questions.**
- **List or bring all your medicines and pills – including vitamins and supplements.**
- **Write down details of your symptoms – when did they start, 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.**

Questions to ask during your appointment

It's okay to ask questions about your health. Here are some examples of questions you could ask.

What might be wrong

Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand. You could say:

- **Can I check that I've understood what you said?**
- **What you're saying is?**

Don't feel embarrassed if you have to ask your health worker to explain something again. You might want to say:

- **Can you explain it again – I still don't understand?**

It's okay to ask your health worker to write down and explain any words you don't understand. And it might be helpful to write things down or ask a family member or friend to take notes.

About any tests

If your health worker has recommended that you go for tests, you might want to ask:

- **What are the tests for?**
- **What will the tests involve?**
- **How should I prepare myself for the tests?**
- **How and when will I find out the results of the tests?**
- **Who do I contact if I don't get the results of the tests?**

About any treatment

You might also have questions about what treatment, if any, is best for you. Examples of questions you could ask are:

- **Are there any side effects/risks?**
- **How long will I need treatment for?**
- **How will I know if the treatment is working?**
- **How effective is this treatment?**
- **Are there other ways to treat my condition?**
- **Is there anything I can do to help myself?**

What happens next

You might want to find out who to contact if you have further problems or questions, or if any support groups are available. You could ask:

- **What happens next – do I come back and see you?**
- **Who do I contact if things get worse?**
- **Do you have any written information?**
- **Where can I go for more information, a support group or further help?**

Useful Checklist

Before you leave your appointment make sure:

- **You've covered everything on your list.**
- **You know what should happen next – and when. Write it down.**

Ask:

- **Who to contact if you have further problems or questions.**
- **For copies of letters written about you if you want to see them – you are entitled to see these. There can be a charge for this.**

After your appointment don't forget to:

- **Write down what you discussed and what happens next. Keep your notes.**
- **Ask what's happening if you are not sent your appointment details.**
- **Ask for the results of any test. If you don't get the results when you expect – ask for them. And it's okay to ask what the results mean.**

Your notes

You can use this space to write down your own notes or questions.

For further copies of this leaflet, or if you would like this information in audio, large print, or in community languages, please phone **0131 244 2378**.

This leaflet is also available from the following websites:

www.scotland.gov.uk

www.nhs24.com

www.hris.org.uk



This leaflet is produced by the Scottish Government, with the help of Health Rights Information Scotland, a project of the Scottish Consumer Council.