

Questions to ask

Before you leave your appointment make sure you know the following:

What might be wrong? You could ask the following questions:

- Can I check that I've understood what you said? What you're saying is...
- Can you explain it again? I still don't understand.
- Can I have a copy of any letters written about me?

What about any further tests, such as blood tests, scans and so on?

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

About what treatment, if any, is best for you

- Are there other ways to treat my condition?
- What do you recommend?
- Are there any side effects or risks?
- 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 don't have any treatment?
- Is there anything I should stop or avoid doing?
- Is there anything else I can do to help myself?

What happens next and who to contact

- 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 more help?



Top tips



Before your appointment



- 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, 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.

During your appointment

- Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand. For example, 'Can you say that again? I still don't understand.'
- If you don't 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 that:**
 - you've 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, and
 - for copies of letters written about you – you are entitled to see these.

After your appointment, don't forget the following



- 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's happening if I'm not sent my appointment details,' and
 - 'can I have the results of any tests?' (If you don't get the results when you expect – ask for them.) Ask what the results mean.