

# A PATIENT GUIDE TO MAKING THE MOST OF:

This guide covers the essentials for success.

- ✓ Be prepared and explain yourself clearly.
- ✓ Understand the results and next steps.

## Before your GP visit...

### Make an appointment:

- It can be difficult if it's busy. Try calling, booking online, or in-person. Don't give up!
- Describe your problem – it may be treatable by a nurse or pharmacist instead.
- If you have more than one concern, you might need to book a double appointment.
- If you are uncomfortable or have an intimate problem, request a same-sex doctor.
- If you need help with English, ask for an interpreter or bring a fluent adult with you.

### Be prepared:

- Arrive early. How will you travel? How long will it take?
- Wear loose clothes and shoes you can easily remove.
- Bring a list of your main symptoms, questions, medications, and any relevant letters.
- You may want to bring a notepad and pen, and a friend or family member for support.

My legs and feet are numb first thing in the morning.

I have a sharp pain in my back, several times a day.

Every time I climb stairs, my chest feels very tight.

### Think about how to describe your symptoms:

- ? What is happening? Where in your body is it?
  - ? Does it feel sore, numb, nauseous, stiff, tight, etc.?
  - ? How often does it happen? Does it affect your life?
  - ? Does anything make it better or worse?
  - ? When did you first notice it happening?
  - ? Is there anything you think might be causing it?
- Try not to underplay or exaggerate how you feel.

# A VISIT TO YOUR GP



### Ask yourself:

What do I want from this visit? A referral? A prescription? Tests? What impacts me most? What am I particularly worried about?

## During your GP visit...

- Describe your problems - try to focus on what is worrying you the most. If you feel like something is not getting across, you can pause and start over again.
- Don't be embarrassed to talk about a personal issue – they have seen it all before!
- Don't be surprised if your doctor makes notes or checks things on their computer.
- It's normal to feel frustrated, but stay calm and polite. The staff are doing their best.

## Your doctor may ask about...

### Your detailed medical history, such as:

- Your health problems, including allergies.
- Your family history – anything similar?
- Any medications or supplements you take, and the dosages of each one.
- Any operations you have had.
- Any unusual activities or travel.
- Habits like alcohol, smoking, or using recreational drugs.

### More general questions, such as:

- “Why did you make this appointment?”
- “Can you describe what your concerns are?”

They may also do physical tests, like heart rate, blood pressure, pain, and reflexes.

You have the option to ask for a chaperone.

### If you are given a **diagnosis**, make sure you understand:

- what it means (in detail),
- the basis for the GP giving it, and how confident they are,
- your options for treatment.

### If you need **further tests**, ask:

- what the tests are for,
- what is involved in each one,
- if there are any associated risks.

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### If you receive a **prescription**, make sure you understand:

- what is being prescribed,
- how to take it and how long for,
- if there are any side effects.

## Once your visit is finished...

- Write down the **main points** of the visit and confirm the **next steps**.
- Pick up any prescriptions and look at any recommended materials.
- Follow instructions about medication, tests or further appointments.
- Keep notes of **your health** and updated **contact details** for your doctor.
- If you are not satisfied with your care, you have the right to seek a **second opinion** - ask the reception or see our resources for advice.

