

## How to prepare for your visit

When you get home after a visit to your GP, there is nothing more frustrating than the realisation that you have forgotten something that was said to you.

### Suggestions

- Before your visit write down the questions you want to ask.
- Take a list of those medications you are currently taking, including doses and frequency. Also remember to tell your GP if you are taking complementary medications, medications from other doctors or dentists, or recreational drugs.
- Remember to tell your GP about the medications to which you may have had an allergic or adverse reaction.
- Take notes or ask your GP to write down things you might forget or don't understand, particularly about medications.
- Take a friend or a member of your family with you.



## Other tips

- To help remember what medications you are taking and to assist your GP when re-prescribing, keep the box the medication came in.
- If it is your first visit to this GP, spend some time making notes about your personal health history and take them with you.
- If you are kept waiting, your GP may have needed to spend time with another patient in a crisis situation. On another occasion it may be you who needs the extra time.
- If you need a reminder of the next injection, blood test etc, ask the GP or reception staff to be added to the recall list



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Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.

# Getting the best from your visit to your GP



Your GP's role is to help you look after your health needs and the health needs of families and others in the community. He or she will identify the nature of your health problem from a broad range of possibilities and then provide appropriate care.

## Communication

Communication is the key to a good consultation. Your GP will need basic information so he or she can work out what's wrong with you. Be honest with your GP. Discuss openly any fears or worries or any concerns you may have about your illness or the treatment suggested.



Remember to tell your GP if you have particular symptoms such as pain or nausea, if you are not sleeping, if you have lost weight, if you are tired or anything else that is not normal for you. Remember to also tell your GP when these symptoms began, how they developed or if anything makes the symptoms better or worse.

## Confidentiality

Anything you discuss with your GP is kept in confidence. However you need to know that whatever is said and noted by your GP could be requested by a court or, subject to your permission, released to an insurance company.

## Having a regular GP

If you have a regular GP he or she can get to know your medical history and build up an understanding of your health needs and current problems and the choice of treatment that is right for you.

There may be times when you want to seek a second opinion. This may help you understand your problem and the appropriate health choices that are right for you. There may also be times when you are unhappy with the service from your GP. Talk to your GP about it.

## Computers in Practices



Computers can be used by your doctor in the following ways:

- \* as an aid to prescribing your medication and the appropriate dose
- \* record your medical history
- \* provide reminders for follow-up visits for immunisation, PAP smears etc
- \* receive pathology and other results quickly and securely
- \* access the Internet and e-mail services

## Appointments

To get the best care and attention from your GP it is important for you to make an appointment for an appropriate length of time. It is recommended that you:

- Make a short appointment for repeat prescriptions etc.
- Make a standard appointment for coughs, colds or flu, injections, blood pressure checks, nausea, abdominal pain and sporting injuries etc.
- Make a longer appointment if it is your first visit to the GP, you would like a full check-up, a pap smear, pre-admission examinations, travel medicine advice, counselling or if you have more than one issue.

Remember to make an appointment for each family member who needs to be seen.

While you don't need to disclose to the receptionist your reasons for making an appointment with your GP, you might like to ask for advice on an appropriate appointment length.

Also, the fee may vary with the length of consultation. Remember to ask.