

Booking the appointment

1. Trust the receptionist.
2. Book to see the right health professional.
3. Is your problem on-going? If so try and see the same doctor about it.
4. Before booking another appointment, have you tried everything your doctor suggested last time?
5. Cancel and rearrange appointments if you will be late or can't make them.

Before your appointment

1. Plan what you are going to say. Consider answers to common questions.
2. Prioritise your concerns.
3. Is a friend more likely to help you explain? Bring them along.
4. Consider what you are looking for. Treatment? An opinion? Reassurance? A referral?
5. Consider writing it all down.
6. Dress appropriately.
7. Have a wash and try to be clean, especially if having intimate examinations.

In the waiting room

1. Turn up early.
2. If using a translator consider telling them about your problem whilst you wait.
3. Consider taking off some of your layers in the waiting room in preparation for your examination.
4. Try and be patient with us. If we are running late there is probably a good reason.
5. Encourage your children to be on their best behaviour. Don't give them something to eat while you wait.

In the consultation

1. Your doctor does not remember every detail of your medical history.
2. Be realistic about what can be achieved in ten minutes.
3. Limit yourself to one problem per appointment.
4. If you have a list of problems, say it quickly at the beginning so we can decide what to focus on.
5. Try not to go off topic with your answers.
6. Expect to answer questions, lots of them. Please do not be offended by our questions.
7. Be specific with timings of symptoms. Did it start today, yesterday, or a week ago?
8. Don't hide things. What are your ideas, concerns, and expectations of us.
9. Tell the truth. Don't make up answers.
10. Don't leave without getting your main question answered. Try and bring it up early.
11. Your appointment is ten minutes long and this includes your GP reading and writing in your notes. This only leaves 8 minutes face to face with the doctor.
12. Turn your mobile off. If you forget and it rings, please don't answer it.

The treatment

1. Be involved in your treatment. If something did or did not work before let us know.
2. Please respect our opinion. You are free to ask for a second opinion.
3. Ask your doctor questions if you don't understand.

Examination tips

1. Cover your mouth when you cough. Encourage children to do the same.
2. When a doctor is examining your chest breathe deeply but relatively quickly – 2 seconds in and 2 seconds out. Try not to talk while we are listening to your chest.