

# How to get the most out of your appointment with a doctor

You have just 10 minutes with your doctor during which, you will need to explain your problem, the doctor may need to examine you, organise any tests and explain any [treatment](#) given. The 10 minute appointment includes the time your GP spends updating your records and writing referrals for you after you have gone. There are some simple tips that can help you get the most out of your appointment!

## BOOKING YOUR APPOINTMENT

1. Giving the receptionist clinical information when asked helps them to book the right appointment for you.
2. If you have an [ongoing](#) problem try to see the same doctor, this is particularly important if you are coming back to receive test results.
3. Some problems need a longer appointment - [smear tests, acupuncture and diabetic assessments](#) will often need a double.
4. [More than one problem to discuss?](#) It may be best to book a double appointment as it is usually only possible to deal with one clinical issue in ten minutes.
5. If you do not speak English we may need to arrange an [interpreter](#) to attend for your appointment.
6. [Young Children](#) need to be accompanied by an adult; each child needs a separate appointment. If you are bringing a baby remember their [red book](#).
7. Some simple queries/ medication issues may just require a [telephone consultation](#)
8. [If you can't attend your appointment](#) CANCEL WELL IN ADVANCE.

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

1. **Make a list of your concerns**; this will help your doctor decide what to deal with during the consultation.
2. **If you have urinary symptoms / an antenatal appointment**, collect a sample on the morning of the appointment (use a clean container) and bring it with you.
3. **If you are having problems with one of your medications** bring it with you so that we know which one it is.
4. **If you know you will need to be examined** wear loose, light clothing and remove your coat on arrival at the surgery.
5. **Turn off your mobile**
6. **Arrive early** - being late delays your doctor and means a longer wait for others. If you are very late your doctor may ask you to rebook.

## DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

1. **Be clear about your concerns at the beginning of the appointment.**  
This helps your doctor decide which problem needs to be dealt with today. If they suggest you return to discuss some problems on a later date it is because they want to be able to give each issue the time it deserves.
2. We want you to remember as much of the advice we give you. **Asking questions, taking notes, bringing someone for support** can help.

**If your doctor is running late...**please be patient! As GPs we see forty to fifty booked patients per day (some of whom may require emergency treatment or be emotionally distressed). We will also have urgent patients added in to an already full surgery or can be called to see them at home if they are extremely unwell.