

Top tips to get the most from healthcare appointments

A Guide from West Byfleet Health Centre

Many people struggle to speak about their medical concerns. Here are some tips to help you make the most from any healthcare appointment with a GP, healthcare professional, at a hospital as an outpatient or for a mental health assessment etc. Please note: GP appointments are only 10 minutes long.

Before your appointment:

- Decide which is your most urgent concern or issue you need to discuss.
- Write down your symptoms, when they started and if anything makes them better or worse.
- Write the most important questions you want answered.
- Take a list of all your medication (including vitamins and minerals).

During your appointment:

- Write down answers to your questions.
- Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand anything.
- If you need to, take a friend or family member to help you remember details.

Before you leave your appointment:

- Check you have covered everything on your list and you understand any terminology.
- Make sure you are clear on what will happen next and when.

Many charities have created condition-specific questionnaires that you can use as a starting point for a conversation with a specialist.

For instance:

- **British Heart Foundation**

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/medical/questions-to-ask-your-doctor>

- **Macmillan Cancer Support**

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatment/your-treatment-options/questions-to-ask-your-healthcare-team>

- **Alzheimer's Association**

<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/treatments/questions-for-your-doctor>