

Making the most of your GP appointment

Before you visit

GPs time is limited, and patients need to make the most of the time available. Being prepared can help you make the most of your appointment.

Think about your main concern

Think about your main reason for booking the appointment before your visit. It could be a physical or an emotional concern.

There is no reason to be embarrassed. GPs see lots of people with lots of conditions. Any information you share is confidential.

Note your symptoms

The note can be written down or recorded on your mobile phone. Try to include:

- When your symptoms began
- What they are
- If they follow a pattern
- How they impact your life or family
- Issues relating to those close to you that may be impacting you.

Symptoms can include pain, changes to your eating habits, changes to your energy levels and your general mood.

If you have a family history of a condition that matches these symptoms note that as well.

Top tip: Keep track of your symptoms over 24 hours to see if you can spot a pattern. A pattern could be your symptoms worsening late at night or immediately after eating.

Note any medication

Make a note of any medicines you are taking or treatments you have tried. This includes treatments for other conditions, including physiotherapy and herbal remedies.

Prepare some questions

You may find it helpful to make a short list of questions before your visit. See section 4 for some suggestions.

During your visit

Take support

If you feel you need it, take a relative, friend or carer to your appointment for support. They may also be able to help you remember or understand what has been said.

Discuss your main concern first. Do not feel you have to justify being there or leave your main concern to the end.

Be honest

It is important that you are honest with your GP about your lifestyle. For example, how much you drink or exercise. You should also be honest about your concerns.

Ask for a chaperone

If you need an intimate examination, you can ask for a chaperone or for the physical examination to be done by another doctor at another time.



Ask questions

There are some suggested questions for your GP appointment in the next section. They are grouped into four main areas: symptoms, tests, treatments and general questions.

Ask about anything you are unsure of. If you do not understand, ask before leaving the room.

Get a contact

You may think of questions to ask after your appointment. Find out who you can contact to get these answered.

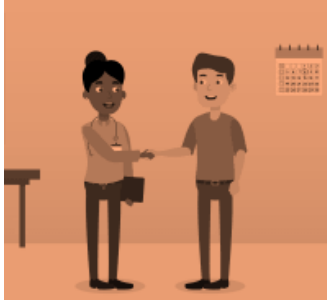
You can also find out the names of any support groups providing reliable information.

Key questions you may wish to ask

Top tip: You have limited time during your GP appointment. For more detailed answers choose a maximum of five questions.

Questions about treatments	Questions about tests
What is the likely treatment?	Do I need any tests?
How long will I need the treatment for?	When will they be done?
Are there any side effects?	What will they involve?
Will it interfere with other medication?	Where will I have them done?
How will it fit in with my life?	Will I need more tests after that?
Are there other options?	How will I get the results?
What happens if I do nothing?	What should I do if I do not get my results?
When will they be reviewed?	

General questions	Questions about symptoms
What support is available for me?	What do my symptoms mean?
Should I make changes to my lifestyle?	How long will they last?
Where can I get more information?	What should I do if they get worse?
Do you have any written information?	What happens next?



Don't be afraid to ask more questions

You might not remember every detail of your GP appointment. This is normal.

If there is anything you are unsure of talk to the practice nurse or phone the GP.

Continue to record your symptoms

Keep track of your symptoms after your visit. This is useful because:

- It can help you see improvements
- It can help you see if your symptoms are becoming worse or more frequent
- If you need to go back to the GP you will be prepared

Your GP should give you an idea of how long a treatment will take to work. If your symptoms last longer than you think is normal or you are concerned, contact your surgery for advice.

Raise small concerns early

If you are unhappy with your GP you can ask to switch GPs, raise your concerns, make a complaint or change practices.

It is usually worth discussing your concerns with your GP or practice manager first.

Seek further support

You can ask other healthcare professionals about a wide range of health problems and treatments. For example, pharmacists and hospital specialists.

There are also dedicated support groups and charities for almost every medical condition.

Top tip: Look for organisations that are recommended by the NHS or your GP surgery. This will help make sure the information is reliable.

Eight top tips

1. Seek advice before your visit

Your GP surgery may be able to help you over the phone. Other clinicians can also offer advice and your surgery receptionist can advise on this.

2. Decide if you need to see a specific GP

Do you want to see someone as quickly as possible or would you prefer a GP who knows your history personally?

3. Be prepared

Record your symptoms. Make a note of any questions. Decide what the most important thing affecting your health is right now.

4. Take support if you feel you need it

This could be a family member, friend or carer.

5. Ask questions

Unclear about any information you have been given? Ask again.

6. Find out who to contact

Ask for contact information in case you have any more questions.

7. Raise small concerns early

If you are unhappy with your treatment raise your concerns as soon as possible.

8. Have a plan

Have a 'treatment plan' in place when you leave the practice

Winchcombe Medical Centre (WMC) News

Statistics

There are 7947 patients as at 31st July

There were 4,413 appointments in July with over 98.5% of patients attending these appointments.

We also continue to process more than 5,000 documents and 3,000 pathology results each month.

The 2023 GP Patient survey showed 95% of patients had an overall good experience at the practice. With 97% saying we have a helpful receptionist team. Over all areas we rated above both that National Level & Local average ratings. These results can be view by visiting <https://gp-patient.co.uk/>

Other News

MEN'S HEALTH

How can I improve my health?

How can I talk about Men's health issues?

Come to an evening of information and find out about a range of health issues facing men today with:

Dr Michael Kilshaw – GP, Winchcombe Medical Centre
Nick Puffett – Clinical Nurse Manager • **Kate's Home Nursing**

Winchcombe Medical Centre Patients' Group Report on Men's Health event 16 May 2023

One of the PG's Aims is to encourage patients to take responsibility for their own health. To this end, we organised, in conjunction with the WMC, a

Men's Health event at the Working Men's club on May 16, 2023. Dr Kilshaw (WMC) and Nick Puffett (Kate's Home Nursing) were the speakers.

The marketing comprised two elements; the posters around the town and in retail outlets plus the use of a targeted, over 40s males, SMS message from the WMC. This contribution to the marketing of the event by the WMC is critical and getting stronger.

The presentations and presenters were excellent. The content was just right, even though it included 'difficult' items such as 'Dying Matters', presented in a positive and humorous manner. The use of the 'Slido' App to allow anonymous questions and the use of a quiz was very beneficial, but a paper and pencil anonymous option was available.

We were pleased to be oversubscribed and apologise to those who couldn't be admitted due to lack of space. Approximately 95 people attended, and a few understandably decided not to stay because they would have to stand for 1.5

hours. However, we look at it, the take-up of the event was excellent. We plan to organise another in the Autumn in a larger venue.

Thanks are due to Dr Michael Kilshaw and Nick Puffett for the excellent presentations and to Geoff Cove, Graham Ogden, Mike Otter, Roy Tustin and Andy Gay from the WMC Patients' Group for their contributions to the organisation.

Health Awareness

Know your numbers (blood pressure): 4th-10th September

"Know Your Numbers!" Week is all about getting your free blood pressure check, and making sure your numbers are within the normal range. The ideal blood pressure is 120/80. Over 6,000,000 people in the UK have high blood pressure and do not realise it, which leads to strokes and heart attacks that could have been prevented. Knowing what your blood pressure is can mean you're able to make the right choices and look after your body properly.

Some people with high blood pressure may experience symptoms, which can be a tell-tale sign that you need to get your blood pressure checked. Some examples of symptoms are: blurred vision, nosebleeds, shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness and headaches. You can start to lower your blood pressure by eating less salt and more fruit and veg, losing weight, drinking less alcohol and being more active.

<https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/know-your-numbers/>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/risk-factors/high-blood-pressure/symptoms-and-treatment>

Prostate health

Prostate problems are common in men over the age of 50. Symptoms of problems with your prostate are: difficulty starting or stopping urinating, a weak flow of urine, feeling like you're not able to properly empty your bladder, needing to pee more often than normal or waking up several times in the night needing to pee. If you're concerned that you're suffering from any of these problems, you should contact your GP practice as soon as possible.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-problems/>

Social Prescribing



Sixways Clinic, Leckhampton Surgery, Cleavelands Medical Centre, Stoke Road Surgery, Winchcombe Medical Centre

WHAT IS SOCIAL PRESCRIBING?

Our health and well-being can be affected in many ways by everyday worries, issues and concerns, Social Prescribing helps to support the non-medical issues that can impact us. Social Prescribing can help you to have more control over your own health and find ways to improve how you feel in a way that suits you.

Examples of things Social Prescribing can help with

Support at home to help individuals remain independent

Accessing care
Caring Responsibilities
Healthy lifestyles
Befriending, counselling and other support groups
Housing, benefits & financial support & advice
Employment, training & volunteering
Education & learning
Getting involved in local groups & activities
Social isolation and Loneliness
Emotional wellbeing
Long-term health conditions
Accessing specialist services & support that can help.



Social Prescribing Link Workers work alongside the GPs and healthcare professionals within your surgery supporting patients with non-medical issues. They work 1:1 with individuals and will listen to you and discuss your interests and what matters to you. They will then work closely with you to identify local services and support that work for you.

Social Prescribing is available to any patient over the age of 16 who is looking for support in taking control of their health and well-being.

If you would like to be referred to a Social Prescribing Link Worker, then please speak with a member of staff within your surgery. A member of the Social Prescribing team will then contact you.

Useful telephone numbers

Winchcombe Medical Centre	01242 602307	Children's Helpdesk (Child Protection)	01452 426565
District Nurses	0300 421 6070	Childline	0800 1111
Cheltenham General and Gloucester Royal Hospitals	0300 422 2222	Relate—Relationship Support	01242 523215
Tewkesbury Hospital	0300 421 6100	Gloucestershire Carers Hub	0300 111 9000
Ambulance/Police/Fire Emergency Service	999	Cheltenham Samaritans	<u>116 123</u> free from any phone
Police Non-Emergency Helpline	101	Gloucestershire Adult Helpdesk (Social Services)	01452 426868
Physio	0300 422 2507 (Cheltenham), 0300 421 6133 (Tewkesbury)	CRUSE Bereavement Counselling	01242 252518
Health Visitors	0300 421 6166	Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board	0300 421 1500
School Nurse	0300 421 6161		