



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Effective communication between you and your health professional is an essential part of good healthcare. You should feel confident and comfortable in making decisions about your health and managing your condition.

Here are some suggestions to help you get the most out of your healthcare appointments

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

Make a longer appointment if the problem you want to discuss is complex, or you need to discuss several issues.

Prepare a summary of your health problems, prioritise the issues you want to discuss, and make a list of questions as you think of them.

Let your health professional know if you need an interpreter or other assistance with communicating.

DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

You should expect to be listened to – and be given clear and adequate explanations of your condition, any recommended tests, treatment options and the expected results.

When you describe your problems, be as accurate, complete and honest as possible.

If your health professional recommends a test, treatment or procedure and you are not clear of its purpose or benefits, you may want to discuss this.

ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AROUND POTENTIAL TESTS OR PROCEDURES

- Do I really need to have this test, treatment or procedure?
- What are the risks?
- Are there simpler safer options?
- What happens if I do nothing?

If you don't understand anything, tell your health professional - and ask them to repeat or clarify the information until you do understand.

If you don't feel confident about your appointment, take a family/whānau member or friend with you.

Take notes if you think you may have trouble remembering important details (or ask your health professional or support person to take notes for you).

If you want to know more, ask your health professional for some written information, or suggestions of where you might find it.

AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

You may want to make a follow-up appointment to ask further questions, discuss continuing issues or talk to your health professional about your decisions after you've had time to consider the options.

If you want to discuss the issues with another health professional, don't hesitate to get another opinion.



FURTHER INFORMATION

[The Health Quality Safety Commission](#)

[ACC](#)

*Adapted from NPS MedicineWise (2016), [Communicating with your healthcare provider](#).
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