

Mental Health and Addiction Services

Our care is: person-centred, recovery oriented, evidenced-based and inclusive of family and carers.

Consumer factsheet

General Practitioner (G.P.) visits



Before your appointment:

- When booking an appointment ask about the G.P.'s specialist qualifications and specify if you prefer a male/female doctor
- Ask if there is a mental health nurse attached to the practice
- When booking ask for a longer appointment time if you need to discuss issues or concerns
- Write down any important questions you want to ask
- Write a list of symptoms you are experiencing, when they started, if they come and go, how severe they are, if anything triggers the symptoms and how they affect the way you feel, think and behave at home and at work
- Write a list of medications you are taking and provide details of any current treatments by any other doctor or specialist
- If you would like support during this appointment ask a friend or family member to attend the appointment with you

During your appointment:

- To get the most out of our appointment it is important that you are open about providing honest information
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask the G.P. to repeat information you may not have understood
- If you are given any medication, your G.P. should tell you how it is expected to help and inform you about any side effects that may occur. You may also want to ask if there are any alternative medications or other treatment options available.
- If the G.P. prescribes medication you should have regular check-ups to monitor and discuss if it is helping, if there are any concerns regarding the medication or if you feel worse.
- Ensure your G.P. is aware of your previous medical history, genetic family history of diabetes, kidney, liver or heart disease, known side effects of medication and if your medication changes ask your doctor for a printout of your prescriptions
- Make sure you fully understand the next steps before finalising the appointment
- If you are referred to specialist mental health services you should still regularly visit your G.P. to discuss your general care needs such as physical health
- If you are unhappy with the advice given or would like to obtain a second opinion you can make an appointment with another G.P.

After your appointment:

- Make any other appointments that your G.P. has advised
- Make sure you understand how and when to take your medication or treatment
- Take ownership of your follow-up care by scheduling another appointment within one to three weeks with the G.P.

Questions to consider asking your G.P.

Questions about your condition	
What is my condition?	
What are the possible causes of this condition? How can I determine my risk for developing a condition?	
How serious is my condition and how can I expect it to affect my home and work life?	
What tests will be involved in diagnosing my condition? What will the tests tell me? How safe and accurate are the tests?	
What is the short and long term outlook for my condition?	
Treatment options	
Is treatment required? If so what is it? Are there alternatives?	
How effective is this treatment and how long will I need treatment for?	
Are there any risks or side effects? What do I do if I experience these effects?	
How can I tell if my symptoms or condition is getting worse? What do I do if my symptoms or condition deteriorates?	
What will happen if I don't have the treatment?	
If the pharmacist offers me a different brand of the same medicine is it ok to take it?	
What should I do if I forget to take medication / treatment?	
What foods, drinks, other medications or activities should I avoid while obtaining treatment?	
Additional Questions	
Do I need a follow-up visit and if so, when?	
Do I need to see any other health professionals (eg: counsellor, mental health service)?	
Is there anything I can do to improve my condition myself?	
Your Own Questions	