

Giving good directions to health facilities



1. Give directions from the individual's point of view

People could come to your facility by bus, car, bike, or on foot, so ask how they are travelling. Once you know where they will park/arrive, give your directions from that point.



2. Give landmarks or points of interest

(e.g. 'the Walk-in Centre is behind the main shopping centre')



3. Say whether the landmark will be on the left, right or straight ahead

(e.g. 'the Emergency Department entry will be on your left. The entrance to the main part of the hospital is straight ahead')



4. Suggest how long it may take to move between landmarks or points of interest

(e.g. 'If you are walking at an average pace, it will take you five minutes to get from the multistorey carpark to the main entrance')



5. Check their understanding

Ask if they would like you to explain again.



6. Suggest alternatives for finding directions

(e.g. 'If you get stuck, please ask a staff member')



7. Provide a map

Not everyone likes or uses maps but for those who do, they are invaluable. Put them everywhere – the internet, on appointment letters, on the walls of the health facility.



8. Keep up to date with changes

If there are changes (e.g. due to construction), ensure that your directions reflect the changes.

Other important points

- No assumptions! A person may have rarely been to your facility
- Speak slowly and clearly if you are giving verbal directions
- Use a friendly tone – verbally or in writing – it helps people feel comfortable
- Take a walk yourself. Familiarity with routes will help you give better directions

Adapted from consumer and health staff comments and <https://www.wikihow.com/Give-Directions>