

# Making the Most of Your Appointment

## Top Tips:

### Know Your Healthcare Rights

You can learn about your rights in all Australian healthcare settings at <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/your-rights/>

### Preparing for Your Appointment

**Question Builder** <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder> -- Create a list of questions to ask your doctor. Print or email the list so that it is handy to take to your appointment. This preparation will help you get more out of the time with your doctor and help you to remember everything you want to ask.

**Your Medical History** – Take a summary of your medical information, including:

- Contacts of other doctors/health providers
- Current health conditions
- Past health conditions and operations
- Medications
- Allergies
- Family history of major illnesses
- Blood test and imaging results
- Advance Care Plan

An example of how to write your own summary can be found here:

<https://chronicillnesstraumastudies.com/patient-medical-history-new-doctor-appointments/>

**Take a support person** to your appointment, they can be a second set of ears and provide emotional support for hard news.

### At the appointment,

Follow these steps to work with your doctor:

1. *share* information:
  - a. symptoms – what and how long
  - b. concerns – anything not normal for you
  - c. Medicines, herbs and vitamins that you take
  - d. Your values and preferences
2. *ask*
  - a. if you don't understand
  - b. for more information right then or for handouts and websites
  - c. what you can do to avoid getting sick
  - d. for a shared health summary (this goes on your My Health Record)
  - e. For a print out of your medicines

3. *repeat* back any instructions or advice
4. *record* the main points (paper or audio)
5. *consider* your options before making a decision.

### After your appointment

**Follow Up** – Book your next appointment/s, take any tests and call for the results. Make sure to keep a record of your appointments and tests in your phone, a calendar or diary.

**Support yourself** and manage difficult emotions that may come up. Try the RAIN method: <https://www.grwhealth.com/post/how-to-use-the-rain-method-for-difficult-emotions>

## Asking Questions

### Ask Me 3

<https://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/Tools/Ask-Me-3-Good-Questions-for-Your-Good-Health.aspx>

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

### Questions to Ask Your Doctor <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/questions-to-ask-your-doctor>

You'll get more out of your healthcare if you're well informed about any treatments, medicines or tests that your doctor or other health professional recommends – and that means asking questions. This guide will help you decide what questions you need to ask.

### Choosing Wisely <http://www.choosingwisely.org.au/resources/consumers/5-questions-to-ask-your-doctor>

Some tests, treatments and procedures provide little benefit. And in some cases, they may even cause harm. Use the 5 questions to make sure you end up with the right amount of care — not too much and not too little

## Useful Links

- **Health Literacy Out Loud Podcast:** When Patients Create Their Own Medical Binders: A Powerful Way to Get Organized and Feel More in Control): <https://www.healthliteracyoutloud.com/2019/09/01/when-patients-create-their-own-medical-binders-a-powerful-way-to-get-organized-and-feel-more-in-control-hlol-190/>
- **Tips from a Doctor:** <https://www.webmd.com/men/features/tips-for-a-successful-doctor-visit#3>

- **Tips from HCCA Members:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sF9JCLaplC>
- **Writing a family medical history:** <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/family-medical-history>

## Apps

All are free on Android and Apple iOS. Check the privacy policy before downloading apps that hold your personal information.

- **Healthdirect** – Find health services, access your My Health Record, use the Symptom Checker, and search for information on health conditions and medicines. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/health-app>
- **MedAdvisor** – used by some pharmacies so you can order medications, set reminders, manage your ecripts and manage medicines for people your care for. <https://www.mymedadvisor.com/>
- **Flaredown** – symptom and treatment tracker designed for people with chronic illnesses. Includes food, mental health and trigger tracking. You can share your data with your doctor. <https://flaredown.com/>
- **MyTherapy** – Medication reminder and symptom tracker app. You can print reports to take to your next appointment. <https://www.mytherapyapp.com/>

## Resources for Diverse Communities

- **Council of Intellectual Disabilities My Health Matters Folder** – This folder contains resources to support people with intellectual disabilities or cognitive impairment to build a good medical history and communicate with their doctors. <https://cid.org.au/resource/my-health-matters-folder/>
- **QLD Government Health Passport** – This can be adapted for use by any child or person with intellectual disability or cognitive impairment and used for health history if needed. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/groups/disability>
- **Spectrum Intersections Self Advocacy In Health Care Toolkit** – This toolkit is designed for and by LGBTQIA+ Autistic People to help them manage their health information and communicate with health professionals. <https://inclusionmelbourne.org.au/projects/spectrum/>
- **Health Translations:** [www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au) - A free online library which provides web links to translated health and wellbeing resources. Includes health information in over 100 languages covering a wide range of topics.