**Getting the most from your consultation**

*We appreciate it can often be frustrating as a patient when appointments are running late, worries about a particular problem aren’t answered or multiple issues saved up over time aren't addressed in a single consultation.*

*The purpose of this leaflet is to provide some small tips and advice to address some of these points and hopefully help you gain the most from your consultation!*

**1)****Prioritise your problems***.* Be prepared that it may not be possible to address multiple problems during a single consultation, depending on the complexity.

A standard GP appointment lasts 10 mins. When subtracting the time taken to write the notes and perform an examination- this will usually mean around 5 mins to take a history and agree on a plan. Time is often short.

Have a think beforehand about which problem is most important to you.

**2)** If you do have multiple issues **let us know at the start of the consultation**. We often find people wait until the end of a consultation to disclose a particularly worrying problem when there are time constraints to exploring this. Let’s triage the problems together at the start.

**3)** Tell us your **Ideas, Concerns and Expectations**. You will often hear us ask- “what do you think” or “what do you think we should do”. This is a fundamental part of the consultation and is taught to all GPs in training. It allows us to focus on your personal expectations - did you fear there may be a specific serious/ non-serious cause? Did you think you need a particular treatment, or seeking reassurance? Even if we disagree we will explain why and aim to come to a shared plan.

Have you thought about these today?

**4)** Have a think about **how will you explain your story**? It's said in the medical community that ‘history alone makes up 80% of the diagnoses’. Questions such as duration, triggers, exacerbating and relieving factors are all very important, and specific facts give the most information. Don't worry if you can't remember if a cough has lasted 7 days or 8 days but ‘around a week’ is infinitely more useful than ‘a while’ which provides no information.

We will of course guide you, but thinking about this prior will help your consultation.

 **5)** Have a look at **useful patient information** websites for more info.

[www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info) and [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot) provide excellent, reliable information about most medical conditions. GPs will often look at these themselves for education and advice. If you know the name of your condition, have a read. This usually provides a good explanation of the issues and may give you additional advice or options for the future which we can discuss.

You could also look these up for more info after your appointment.

**6)** Were you aware that the **role of** **local pharmacists** has expanded and they are able to assess and give **treatment for urine infections in women** **aged 16-65 and impetigo**. They are also able to give advice and treatment for other common issues such as earache, conjunctivitis, coughs and colds and many others.

It may be quicker and easier to see a pharmacist for such issues. They will also direct you to a GP if they have any concerns about the issues or are unsure.

**Was this information helpful?**

*Hopefully some of this information has been useful. Please spend a few moments on the questions below for feedback.*

***Please circle below. On a scale of 1-5:***

 How much new information was contained in this leaflet that you had not thought about prior?

*(1- No new information, 3- a reasonable amount, 5- a lot of new information)*

1 2 3 4 5

How likely are you to use the advice contained in this leaflet during your next consultation?

*(1- very unlikely, 3 – probably, 5 – very likely)*

1 2 3 4 5

After reading this leaflet how much more likely do you think you are to use additional services (pharmacy and NHS inform website) in the future?

*(1- no more than before, 3 a bit more, 5- a lot more)*

1 2 3 4 5

Overall, how helpful have you found the information in this leaflet?

*(1- not helpful at all, 3 reasonably helpful 5 - very helpful)*

1 2 3 4 5

Circle your age bracket below:

***<18 18-25 26-35 36-50 51-65 66- 80 >80***

*Many thanks for your participation. Dr N Thompson*