

# **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CONSULTATION**

The average GP consultation in the UK is about 7 minutes long. At Wapping Health Centre we provide longer Appointments at 10 minute intervals, with catch up longer appointments also added to the surgeries. We would very much like to offer longer appointments but this would affect the number of people that could be seen in a surgery. In an effort to maximise what can be achieved in your consultation, we put forward these suggestions:

## **1. BE PREPARED**

It can be helpful to make a list of any questions / problems you wish to discuss beforehand.

If you have several problems please make a list to show the Doctor at the beginning of the consultation. It is useful for the Doctor to hear all the problems as they may be related in some way. However, be prepared to make a separate appointment if you are not able to cover all your problems in one appointment – this can be better in the long run rather than rushing.

## **2. MAKE YOUR AGENDA EXPLICIT**

Tell us about....

- Any ideas about what you think may be causing your symptoms. This will help the doctor to see things from your perspective
- Any worries or concerns that you have (however trivial or embarrassing they might seem!). These are best expressed – often little unanswered worries can grow into larger problems and sharing them often yields a reassuring answer.
- Any ‘expectations’ that you have from the appointment eg were you wanting to be referred to hospital, or having been listened to and examined, did you want to manage things yourself rather than be prescribed something. We’d rather you speak up now rather than go home frustrated that you didn’t get your point across!

## **3. ANTICIPATE**

For example, if you have waterworks trouble, take a specimen of urine with you as it can be tested on the spot. You also may need to be examined, so women with gynaecological problems should avoid appointments coinciding with their periods.

## **4. ONE APPOINTMENT PER PERSON**

Please make separate appointments for each member of the family to enable us to give full attention to each patient individually.

## **5. TAKE SOMEONE WITH YOU**

It's helpful if you're getting important test results or there's going to be a lot to take in.

If you're seeing your doctor because of memory problems or funny turns, for example, input from a friend, relative or other “witness” may help the doctor enormously.

## **6. KNOW YOUR HISTORY**

Getting your story straight is vital, as most diagnostic clues are found in the information that you give to your doctor.

Rehearse what you're going to say. And remember that you may be able to expect what kind of questions the doctor will ask you. For example, if you have a pain, he or she will want to know how long you've had it, where it is, what it feels like, whether anything makes it worse or better.

## **7. DON'T LET THE DOCTOR GET AWAY WITH MEDICAL JARGON**

If you understand your diagnosis or treatment, you'll feel more confident about what's happening. If he or she slips into medicospeak, ask for a Plain English translation.

## **8. ASK FOR WRITTEN INFORMATION**

Research shows that patients often have problems remembering information given to them during consultations.

Ask for a patient leaflet or website on your condition. Or ask the doctor to write it down so that you can check it out later.

**WE HOPE THIS INFORMATION HELPS YOU GET THE MOST OF OUT YOUR CONSULTATION – WE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR FEEDBACK ON WHETHER IT HAS BEEN USEFUL**