













## SAB Medical Aid guide: visiting your doctor

By actively taking part in the care that is offered to you by your doctor you can help to increase the effectiveness of that care. Try at all times to be fully informed about your illness and your care. Your doctor will guide you on the best options available, but will expect you to be part of some important decisions and choices that need to be made.

1.  **Understand clearly what your doctor says to you.** Repeating back to the doctor what you have been told is a useful way to make sure you have understood.
2.  **Make sure you know what your doctor thinks might be wrong with you and what you need to do next.** Do this before you leave your doctor. You can ask your doctor to write down what is wrong with you (your diagnosis) so that you are sure you have it correctly.
3.  **Sometimes your doctor may need you to have tests done, like blood tests or X-rays.** Ask what the tests are for, when the results will be ready, and when and how the results will be communicated to you.
4.  **Your doctor may even tell you that you need to have an operation.** This can be quite scary so it's important that you understand what is happening. **It is your decision to have the operation or not,** so you should ask your doctor what **all the options are** and what the doctor believes is the **best option for you.** You need to understand all the benefits and risks of the operation so that you can make the best decision for you.
5.  **If your doctor starts you on new medicine, ask how long it will be for, what benefits you should expect from the medicine and what the side effects are.** If you are worried about the side effects, ask the doctor if there are ways to reduce these if they occur. Remember to **always remind your doctor about any allergies** you may have.
6.  **When discussing your treatment, you can ask if there is anything you can do to help you recover,** such as **exercise or changes to your diet.**
7.  **Ask and be sure that you know who to contact if your illness gets worse or if you have problems with the medicine,** particularly for after-hours treatment.
8.  **If you need to go to a casualty or emergency room for urgent care, ask your doctor what information the casualty doctor will need to know about your illness. Write down these details and keep them with you** for when you may need urgent care.
9.  **You should always know the name of your illness and the medicine you are on.** Sometimes medical terms are hard to remember or say but there is usually a simpler description that your doctor can give you to use. Keep this information in a place you can easily get to when you need it. It's a good idea to also do this for close members of your family.
10.  **Your doctor will expect you to ask questions that you would like the answer to. Don't hesitate to ask, anytime!**

*Content adapted from THE NHS GUIDE, "QUESTIONS TO ASK".*