

Making the most of your appointment

Medical appointments often present an overwhelming amount of information and a limited time frame for asking questions.

It is important to make sure you are prepared beforehand to make sure you get the most out of your appointment.







“Actually, the more involved the patient, the better their outcomes. I really think that’s true. There are a few simple things, have your last clinic letter on your phone. Have a complete list of medication, with the name, the doses, how often you take it.”

- Prof Gerry Carr-White Vice President Cardiomyopathy UK

Contact us

-  www.cardiomyopathy.org
-  contact@cardiomyopathy.org
-  01494 791 224
-  Helpline: 0800 018 1024
-  75a Woodside Road
Amersham, Buckinghamshire
HP6 6AA

Stay in touch






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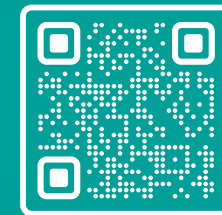
We rely on donations to fund our work supporting people affected by cardiomyopathy. For details about supporting us, go to our website: www.cardiomyopathy.org

Questions to ask

Having the opportunity to ask questions can help you to understand your condition better. It might be helpful to prepare any questions and concerns you may have before your appointment

Here are a few things you might want to ask about:

-  Upcoming investigations or tests
-  Medications
-  Your wellbeing
-  Your lifestyle and exercise
-  Who and how you should contact in the event that you have any concerns



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to watch the full presentation on how to prepare for a clinical appointment, delivered by Cardiology Nurse Consultant Kate Abernethy

Before your appointment



Prior history

Have a copy of your last clinical letter and a list of your current medications with you. Include the name, dose and how often you take them, also include any over-the-counter medications you are taking.



Tip - Taking a photo of these on your phone can be helpful.



Your symptoms

Make a note of any new symptoms you have noticed or any change in existing symptoms since your last appointment. Include how often you experience these, how long they last and if any activities trigger them.



Tip - Use a symptom diary to record these.



Daily life

Do your symptoms affect what you can do each day, for example, can you walk as far as you could previously?



Tip - It might be helpful to note what you feel has changed so that you can inform your cardiologist.



Emotional well-being

Think about how your condition has affected your emotional well-being. Have you been feeling anxious, depressed, or stressed? If so, how has this affected you?



Tip - Ask your loved ones if they have noticed any changes, if you can, consider having someone with you during your appointment.

During your appointment



Use your notes

Remember to have your notes with you during your appointment. Make sure you are listening carefully and making notes during your appointment if you need to.



Tip - Use the notes app on your phone or device.



Take your time

You shouldn't feel rushed through your appointment, this is your time to discuss how you have been feeling with your clinician, be specific about any symptoms you might have and say how these affect you. Take time to think about your questions.



Tip - Refer to your notes during your appointment.



Ask questions

Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you don't understand something your clinician is saying. Don't forget to say how you are feeling emotionally and physically, our emotional health is important too.



Tip - Write down the questions you know you want to ask before your appointment.



Get clarification

If you have been advised to start on new medications or alter the dose of any of your existing medications, ask how this will be communicated to you; will you receive a letter summarising this appointment?



Keep record of your consultation

This is so that you can refer to it later along with your other clinical letters and results.



Further support

Ask your clinician where you can find more support services and information.

After your appointment



Check your notes

Check that the notes you have made make sense to you, if you are not sure about something your clinician said, our Cardiomyopathy UK Specialist Nurses may be able to advise you further.



You can call our nurses helpline on 0800 018 1024, the lines are open Monday to Friday, from 8:30am - 4:30pm.



New medications

If you have been prescribed new medication, make a note on your calendar or diary for when these should be started. If you have any questions about medications, you can ask your pharmacist for more information.



Key dates

Check your notes for the details of any tests or investigations you need and keep a record of the likely dates these will be to remind you nearer the time.

