



What happens when your doctor asks you to see a specialist?



Seeing your local doctor (GP)



Why does my GP want me to see a specialist?

Your GP will talk to you about why they want you to see a **specialist**.



A **specialist** is a senior doctor who is an expert in a certain type of medicine.

They are usually based in a hospital.



Usually your doctor wants the help of the specialist to decide the best way of treating you.



It might involve having a test or **procedure** that cannot be done in your local surgery.



A **procedure** is where the specialist doctor does something to you.



It might involve having a look inside your body.

They do this to find out more about your health problem.



Your GP will tell you if you can choose where to see the specialist.



An **appointment** is an arrangement to meet someone.



How do I make an appointment?

There are different ways to make an appointment:

● Online

You may be able to book the appointment online.



Your GP will tell you how to do it. They will give you a reference number and password.

● Letter

You may get a letter from the hospital telling you when and where the appointment is.



You should reply as soon as possible and tell the hospital if you can go on that date.



● Telephone

You may get a letter asking you to telephone and make an appointment.



Seeing the specialist

Having a test or procedure

If you need a test or procedure, the specialist will:



- Arrange the test or procedure. They will tell you how you will find out when it is and where to go.



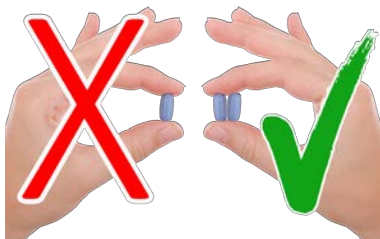
- Give you the results of the test or procedure. They may do this in a separate appointment or by letter.

What happens if I need new medicines?

The specialist might suggest you:



- Take a new medicine



- Change how much of the medicine you are already taking



The specialist is responsible for:

- Giving you the first **prescription** for any new medicine
- Giving you enough medicine to last for at least 7 days



A **Prescription** is a note written by a doctor which says what medicine you need.



You will take the prescription to the pharmacy.

The pharmacist will give you the medicine.



After this your GP will give you **prescriptions** for any more medicines you need.



It is important that you understand:

- What medicine you should be taking
- How much you should take
- When you should be taking it

If you are not sure, please ask.

What if I need a fit note?

If you are not fit to go to work the specialist should give you a **fit note**.



A **fit note** is a note written by a doctor that says you should not go to work.

It used to be called a sick note.



The fit note should cover the time they think that you will be unfit for work, or up to the next time you see the specialist.



You should not need to see your GP to get a fit note after an appointment at the hospital.



What if I need a follow up appointment?

A **follow up appointment** is when you have to go back and see the specialist again.



The specialist will tell you if you need a follow up appointment.



If you do need a follow up appointment the hospital will contact you.



If you don't hear anything, you should contact the hospital, not your GP's surgery.



What if I have a question?

If you have a question about your hospital care you should speak to the specialist.



Before you leave the hospital make sure you know how to contact the specialist's office.



If you have any general questions about your health, you should contact your local GP's surgery.

Checklist for seeing a specialist



Has the hospital given me enough of any new medicines to last at least seven days?



Do I understand:

- What the medication is for?
- How to take it ?
- Any **side effects**?



Side effects are unpleasant things that sometimes happen when you take medication.



Have I been given an information leaflet?



Do I have the telephone number and email of the specialist's office if I have a question?



Do I need a fit note? If yes, have I been given one?



Do I need a hospital follow up appointment? Do I know how this is arranged?



Do I have the names and contact details of organisations who can give me more information or support if I need it?



If you are not sure about any of the questions on this checklist ask a member of staff before you leave the hospital.

About this leaflet



This leaflet has been written with the help and support of:

- NHS England



- The British Medical Association



- The National Association for Patient Participation

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