

WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT

Tell the receptionist why you want to see the doctor. That will help the receptionist know how long your appointment should be. It is easier for your doctor to look after you if the receptionist knows that you need more time than a routine appointment.

You will need extra time for:

- a check-up for yourself or a child
- a complete medical examination
- counseling of any kind
- a Pap test
- a medical exam for a driver's license
- ear syringing
- care for a chronic disease
- having a form completed

Please be polite

Doctors try to run their practices so that they have time to see patients who have unexpected medical problems. If you need an appointment for something unexpected, please focus on that problem when you see the doctor. If you have other medical issues that are not urgent, please book an appointment for another day. That way, the other people waiting to see the doctor don't have to wait as long.

Please come early in case you have to fill out forms. If you have to cancel your appointment please call as soon as you can. Other patients may be waiting to get an appointment.

UNDERSTAND YOUR HEALTH

Your doctor needs to get information from you about your general health and your symptoms. Tell your doctor what you think they should know. It is important to know your own medical history and learn about your family's medical history. You should also keep a written record of your allergies and immunizations.

It is important to understand what your doctor tells you. Listen carefully to what your doctor says. Ask questions if you don't understand. The doctor will try to explain in a different way. When the doctor gives you instructions (like when to take your medicine), repeat them back to the doctor to make sure you understand.

Do some research

Learn as much as you can about your own health problems. And while you are at it, you can also learn about how to stay healthy!

The Internet is a great place to learn about health questions, but not all websites are reliable. Here are three websites you can trust for health information:

- www.healthy.nl.ca
- www.hc-sc.gc.ca
- www.canadian-health-network.ca

Websites may give you good information, but only your doctor can make the diagnosis about your health.

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR DOCTOR'S VISIT



Doctors in Newfoundland and Labrador work hard to give their patients the best possible care. This guide will help you get the most from your doctor's visit.



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should I book extra time if I need complex care?

Yes, that is a very good idea. It will help the receptionist plan your appointment so that you get the right amount of time and other patients won't be kept waiting. Tell the receptionist why you are coming to the doctor so he or she can book you the right amount of time.

How many things can I ask about at each visit?

Your doctor's main goal is to help you get better and stay healthy. The doctor needs at least 10 to 12 minutes to properly assess a problem, give a professional diagnosis and make a treatment plan. Since a routine appointment is short, it's best to try and stick to one health issue for each visit.

Your doctor will try very hard to make sure your needs are addressed during your appointment. However, if you have a number of health concerns, you might have to schedule a second appointment. Two separate appointments will be more helpful than a single rushed one.

ARRIVE PREPARED

Organize your concerns

Before your appointment:

- Make a list of your health problems or concerns. Start with what is bothering you the most.
- Make a list of the questions you want to ask your doctor.

Please bring all of these things to your appointment:

- a list of all your current medications and dosages
- your MCP card or hospital card
- any new personal information (like a new address or telephone number)

At your appointment:

- Make notes about what the doctor tells you. You can look at your notes when you get home to remind you of what the doctor said.
- Your doctor may ask you to book a second appointment if there is not enough time to talk about all your concerns or answer all your questions.

KNOW YOUR SYMPTOMS

Describe your health problem

Your doctor needs to know your symptoms to make a proper diagnosis.

- Explain your symptoms clearly and one at a time.
- Give the doctor as much information as you can. Don't leave out important information.
- Don't tell the doctor what you think you might have. Just describe the symptoms.

Your doctor needs to know these four facts about your symptoms:

1) Location: Where does it hurt, or where does it bother you?

2) Description: How does it feel? Use plain language to describe your symptoms. Try not to talk about unrelated information.

3) Duration: How long has it been bothering you? How long does it last?

4) Intensity: How bad is it? How does it affect your daily life? You can give an example to explain how your symptoms affect your activities.