

Make the most of your health appointment

Your health is important. If something doesn't feel right, it's okay to ask for help. Here are some tips to make it easier to talk with a doctor, nurse or another healthcare provider.

Before you go

- Choose a healthcare provider you feel comfortable with. You can ask for someone who understands your culture or women's health.
- Book a longer appointment if you need more time. Ask for an interpreter if you need one.
- Write down what is worrying you the most and the questions you want to ask. Include when your symptoms started, how often they happen, what helps or makes them worse, and any medicines you are taking.

While you're there

- Bring a **support person** if you want to. They can help you remember information and take notes.
- Be open about your **symptoms**. Say what has changed and how this affects your life. This helps your healthcare provider understand what is happening.
- Ask **questions** if something is unclear or you do not feel heard. It's okay to ask again.
- Before you leave, ask **what happens next**. This could include tests, medicines, another appointment, or what to do if you don't feel better.

After you leave

- Keep track of any changes. Book another appointment if you are still worried or not getting better.
- You can talk to another healthcare provider if you need more help or support.

More information and support

Health and Disability Advocacy Service: www.advocacy.org.nz

Health Quality & Safety Commission: www.bit.ly/health-visit

Health New Zealand: www.healthnz.govt.nz/WomensHealth

Call or text 1737 for emotional support 1737: 1737.org.nz

My notes

My symptoms

Write down the symptoms that worry you the most so you can explain what's been happening and make sure nothing important is missed.

You could start with "The changes I've noticed are..." or "I'm most worried about..." or "I made this appointment because..."

Medicines I'm taking

Write down any medicines you are taking.

My questions

Use this space to write the questions you do not want to forget.

Helpful question starters: "What could be causing this?", "What are my options?", "What should I watch for?", "Who can I ask if I have more questions?"

My appointment notes

Write down what the healthcare provider says.

| You could say "Can you explain that to me again please."

What I need to do next

Write down any tests, medicines, appointments, or what to do if you don't feel better.

| You could say "What happens next?"