



Making the most of your GP appointment

GP appointments at Te Puke Medical Centre are 15 minutes in duration. This isn't a lot of time to meet the doctor, explain your symptoms, undergo a medical examination, and discuss further tests or a treatment plan. However, we want to be thorough to ensure we deliver high quality care, and as always we put patient safety first.

Therefore, we've put together a few tips to help you make the most of your GP appointment, to help you get the most appropriate and timely care you need.

#1 - **Please come with just one problem, or two smaller problems, per appointment**

- any more than this often means we cannot cover each problem thoroughly, things can get missed, and we tend to run late for all our following appointments. Please tell us about your most important problem first. If you have multiple problems to discuss, please book a double appointment. *

#2 - **Write down your symptoms and how long you have had them**

- sometimes it can be hard to recall these on the spot.

#3 - **Write down any specific questions you have**

- to ensure your doctor answers these before you leave the consult.

#4 - **Bring a support person if you want**

- an extra set of ears can be helpful to remember what has been discussed. If you need a translator please let us know in advance so one can be arranged.

#5 - **Wear appropriate clothing**

- this might seem an odd request, but if you have, for example, a knee problem it is a good idea to wear shorts or a skirt.

#6 - **Before leaving ensure you recap the consult with the GP**

- to ensure our mutual understanding of what has been discussed.

#7 - **Ask for any resources regarding your problem to read at home**

- there is plenty of advice and support out there and knowing some credible websites or other resources can be helpful to gain further understanding of your condition or treatment.

#8 - **Bring any recent correspondence or letters**

- if you have letters from hospital or other health practitioners, or test results, please bring them along as we may not have received them by the time you come in.

#9 - **Bring in your regular medications, or a list of these**

- include any other supplements or treatments you have been using.

#10 - **Please try to see the same GP each time you come in**

- you will be registered here under a specific GP, it is much better for your overall care to develop a relationship with your GP so they can really get to know your medical needs and how these affect your life at home / in the workplace etc. This also saves on having to repeat your medical story to multiple GPs, so your time in the consult is used more effectively. If your condition cannot wait until your GP is free then of course you can see any of our other GPs in their absence (it can be good to have a 'secondary' doctor in mind).

Why are our appointments only 15 minutes?

A 15 minute appointment is the standard in GP practices across New Zealand. In fact some GP appointments elsewhere (including online appointments) are only 10 minutes, which we feel is really not enough time to safely cover your concerns. You may be aware through media coverage that General Practices in New Zealand are significantly understaffed and underfunded as a whole - if we lengthened our appointments to even 20 minutes duration then waiting times to see a GP would extend significantly, and we would need to increase co-payments to patients to cover the cost. If you have multiple conditions or concerns but have financial barriers to seeing a GP more frequently then please advise our reception - we have limited access to some additional funding to help those in need.

* Please note the following all generally require separate 15 minute GP appointments:

- Prescription renewals for regular medications where you have multiple medical issues or medications
- New injuries
- Respiratory or gastrointestinal infections (flu, fever, colds, vomiting and diarrhoea)
- Mental health concerns (may need longer)
- Drivers licence medicals (booked with a 15 minute nurse appointment prior)
- Skin check for a few specific lesions

The following generally require 30 minute 'double' appointments:

- Travel medicine appointment
- Diving, aviation, defence force, or insurance medicals
- Full skin check including photos as required

Phone consults

Instead of seeing a GP in-person at the practice we offer phone consults as an alternative. You may find this more convenient rather than having to come into the practice. We can generally achieve a successful consultation over the phone but if you think your condition will require an in-person examination then a face-to-face consult would be more appropriate. If we find early on in the phone consult that an in-person consult is more appropriate we will advise you that this is the case and can re-book you into the next convenient appointment time or suggest you come to see our duty doctor on the day if necessary.

Patient Portal

We have a 'Patient Portal' you can access via an app or website where you can view your tests results, order repeat regular medication, and book appointments, which may help save time. Please enquire through our reception.

Your health and wellbeing are our priority

We want you leaving your consultation having had a positive experience with your GP and feeling confident in your care plan and content that your needs have been met. Please let us know via our suggestion box or email if there is any way you think we can improve your experience.