

**A guide to help you
use your local GP
service** *to take care of your
body, heart and mind.*

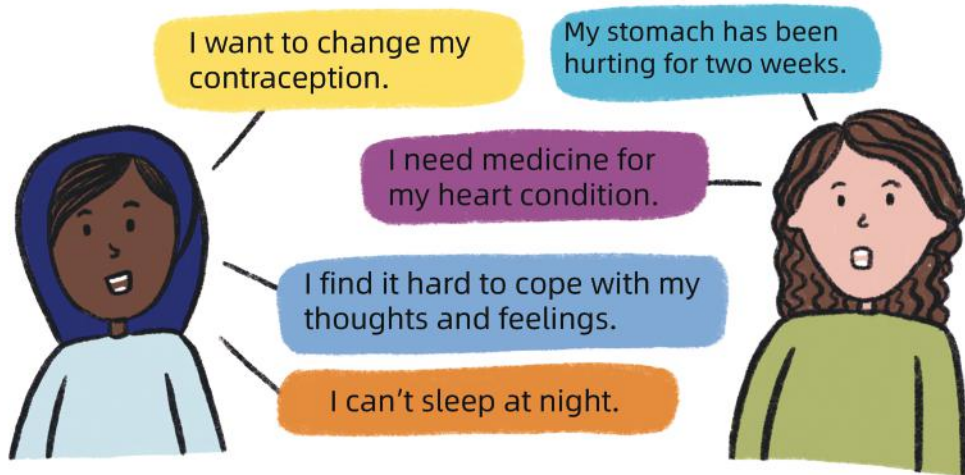


Created by Refugees for Refugees

What problems can your GP help with?

Nurses and doctors at your local GP Surgery can give examinations, advice, and treatment to help keep your body, heart and mind healthy. They can help with:

- Persistent physical pain, injury, stress, anxiety, sadness and loneliness, skin problems, drug and alcohol problems and breathing problems
- Providing prescriptions for medication
- Making referrals to other health and social services, such as hospital clinics for serious problems and specialised mental health services
- Giving vaccinations and providing contraception
- Maternity care and baby and child health checks



How can you access your GP?

1. Registering with your GP

Collect a registration form from your local GP to take home to complete or ask for help at the surgery. Some surgeries have online registration.

2. Booking an appointment

Visit the GP surgery's website, call reception before 9am, or use the NHS App. You will need to say:

- Name and date of birth
- Why you need to see the GP
- If your problem is urgent
- Whether you need a phone or face-to-face appointment
- When you are available

3. Going to your appointment

Make sure you arrive 5 minutes before your appointment. You will be asked to sit in the waiting room and called when the doctor is ready.

5. After your appointment

It is important to follow the advice or treatment plan from the doctor.

Taking medication

Attending appointments at another service

Self-care

Having a blood test

Picking up prescriptions from the pharmacy

The doctor will give you a form with instructions for your blood test. Check if you need to fast before your test.

Make sure to check if you need to take a printed prescription to the pharmacy or if the doctor is sending your prescription to a specific pharmacy.

4. Speaking to your GP

Your appointment will last 10 minutes. Be prepared to tell the GP your problem and how long you have had it for. Try to talk about the most important problem first and make sure you fully understand the treatment plan before leaving.



What are your healthcare rights?

It is important that you are aware of your healthcare rights. The following rights are protected by NHS policies:

1. You do not need to show proof of address or immigration status to register with the GP.
2. If a GP refuses to accept your registration, they must give their reasons in writing.
3. You have the right to complain against discrimination if the GP refuses to register you without a valid reason.
4. You can change doctor or surgery without giving a reason.
5. You can request a male or female doctor, nurse or interpreter.
6. The GP must use a professional interpreter if you cannot understand or speak English well enough to know what treatment the doctor is giving you.
7. You have the right to ask for a different interpreter if you are unhappy with the service.
8. GP treatment is free of charge.
9. You have the right to refuse treatment.
10. You have the right to complain if the GP does not follow the above rules and policies.

Can you trust your GP?

The GP is a confidential service. This means that everything you tell the GP is kept secret, including your personal details and medical records. The GP is not allowed to tell anyone about you without your permission unless:

- you lack the capacity to consent
- it is required by law or ordered by a court
- if you or another person are at risk of death or serious harm

Should you share information about your life with your GP?

It is not always easy having a conversation about your past experiences with your GP. Especially if you don't know them very well.

Some people find that sharing details about their life helps the GP provide better care.

However, it is ok to choose not to share details about your life with the GP, even if they ask you.

Either way, your GP will be ready to listen to you if you want to talk to them.

It's important to remember that it is always ok to ask for help and being open and honest is the best way to get the support you deserve.

How can you prepare for your visit to the GP?

- Think about what you want to say in advance
- You might want to invite a family member or friend with you for support
- Focus on how you have been feeling over the past few months
- Use the words to describe your experience that make sense to you
- Make sure you understand what the doctor is saying
- Take something to write notes on



Should you tell the GP if you feel worried, sad or find it hard to cope?

Your GP can provide support to improve your well-being if you are struggling with persistent worrying, sadness or isolation.

It can be hard to talk about these kinds of experiences but sharing how you feel with your GP can be the first step to finding support.

Remember, no problem is too small or unimportant to deserve help.



Have you had a bad experience at reception?

Interacting with the reception can be challenging for a number of reasons. Here are five common problems patients have at the reception:

The receptionist doesn't give a useful answer to your question.



The receptionist might not have understood your problem. Repeat yourself slowly, ask to write down your problem, use a translator app or ask for an interpreter.

The receptionist does not have time to give you the attention you need.

Ask them when you can return to talk to a member of staff.

The receptionist is rude or unwelcoming towards you.

Stay calm and repeat your question, show that you understand the receptionist is busy. If this problem persists, you can complain to the practice manager.

You are unhappy with your appointment time or the doctor you are booked to see.

You can ask the receptionist a different appointment time, doctor or nurse.

You struggle to communicate with the receptionist over the phone.

You can request an interpreter, send an email or ask to come into the surgery to speak to a receptionist.

The following services can help if you have problems accessing your GP or with the care you receive. You can also speak to your case worker or the practice manager at the GP surgery.

Migrant Help - 0808 8010 503
www.migranthelpuk.org

The Patients Association - 0800 345 7115
www.patients-association.org.uk

Refugee Council - 0808 196 7272
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

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