

# DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT



As a reminder, an appointment will typically last 5-10 minutes. This may seem like a short amount of time but you can share a lot of information if you prepare and make yourself comfortable in the room.

It's time for your appointment and it's a great opportunity to build a relationship with your doctor or nurse. Two-way communication is very important to ensure that you achieve your appointment goals.

It's important that you feel at ease and ready for a conversation! You might find it useful to take some deep breaths as you walk into the appointment and then start your discussion with some general observations about how you are feeling, physically and emotionally.

Once you and your doctor or nurse are chatting comfortably, move on to your list. You can give a very brief description of each point you would like to discuss and let them know which one is the most important to you.

Open questions are those that **cannot** be answered "yes" or "no". See the examples below of closed questions compared to open ones:

## Closed questions

- Is there anything I can do to improve my condition?
- Does this treatment have any side effects?
- Is there anywhere I can find further information on living with psoriasis?

## Open questions

- What can I do to improve my condition?
- What are the side effects of this treatment?
- Where can I find further information on living with psoriasis?



*"I don't tend to ask closed questions so I'm not given a yes or no answer. Asking open questions means my doctor or nurse gives me a much fuller and in-depth answer."*

**Sean**

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The appointment is your time so raise the questions that matter to you. You can keep talking until you are comfortable with the information shared and decisions you and your doctor or nurse make. It's important to be honest, try not to be embarrassed and don't be afraid to say if you don't understand or agree with any bits of the conversation. You can then discuss options together.



*"Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand. For example ask, 'Can you say that again? I still don't understand'"*

**Gill**

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*"Sometimes you can still feel that your healthcare professional is under time pressure and they are trying to rush you, but that's my time and I want to make the most of it."*

**Gill**

**Doctors and nurses can sometimes use quite technical language during the appointment. If you can't understand their explanations, ask them to repeat everything in simpler language. You can also ask for written material that explains the medical issues in greater detail, so that you can read up on this later.**

Confidence is the key here. You know your goals for the appointment and what your ultimate goal for psoriasis is. You've thought about it, you've written your list, you've prioritised and rehearsed. Now is the time to remind yourself that it's your time and that you are entitled to be there for your full appointment time if you need to be.

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**Remember**, if you have been tracking your psoriasis symptoms over time to show your doctor this information. This will help show them how your psoriasis has been affecting your life! Highlight in particular any bad flairs, show them photos or tell them of examples of things you couldn't do because of your psoriasis. This will demonstrate how your psoriasis is impacting your quality of life.

Our clear skin champions say the best way to track this is to keep a diary or alternatively you can download SymTrac™ Psoriasis.

**SymTrac™ Psoriasis is a free app**, which has been developed with patients to help you track your psoriasis and the impact it has on your life over time. It has 3 easy to use features which help do this.

Visit [www.askforclear.co.uk](http://www.askforclear.co.uk) for more information or search 'SymTrac Psoriasis' in the Apple App Store or Android Google Play Store to download for free!



*"You know your body and your skin just as well as they know the scientific side of it. So it is important to remember that you've got an opinion in this and you need to be heard."*

**Gill**

*"Let your doctor or nurse know that you are knowledgeable about your condition. If I'm not happy with my healthcare professional's decisions, I always question him and ask why he has come to that conclusion."*

**Sean**



No one knows you better than you know yourself. Remember that you are the expert when it comes to you and your doctor or nurse wants to help you achieve the best care. It's better all-around if you are involved in making decisions about your care as it will be you managing the psoriasis. You shouldn't be afraid to make suggestions and discuss them with your doctor or nurse.

Respectful discussions are the bedrock of building a good relationship with your doctor or nurse and you, as an expert in your own condition, are entitled to be at the heart of them. Your doctor or nurse is the expert in psoriasis so by working in partnership, you will be best placed to achieve the best possible outcome.

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Sometimes you may be seeing a healthcare professional who doesn't know you well. You should feel comfortable to share your knowledge, talk through your experiences to date and ask for the appointment to be based around an open and collaborative discussion.



*"If I'm talking to my consultant, I wouldn't try to put him on the back foot... because he may then put the barriers up. Just ask nicely, ask smiling."*

**Gill**

It's also worth summarising the conversation at the end of the appointment, pointing out the information and recommendations that you will think about at home and any actions that your healthcare professional has agreed to take. Doing this will help you to reflect on the appointment and provide your healthcare professional with an opportunity to share any further information that might help.

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## Sources

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