

5-minute guide - Talking to your GP or healthcare practitioner about your menstrual health

Why preparation helps

Appointments with healthcare professionals can sometimes feel short and it can be difficult to remember everything you want to say.

Preparing in advance can help you make the most of the conversation and ensure your concerns are clearly understood.

Tracking your symptoms over several months can also help identify patterns that might otherwise be missed. This can be particularly important for menstrual health conditions such as Endometriosis, Adenomyosis, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome or Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder.

Your healthcare practitioner's role is to listen, investigate and help you explore possible treatments or next steps.

Before your appointment

You may find it helpful to prepare a few key points before attending your appointment.

Consider bringing:

- your menstrual health tracking
- a list of symptoms and when they occur in your cycle
- information about how symptoms affect your work, sleep or daily life
- details of medications or treatments you have already tried
- your priorities right now e.g. managing pain, fertility, heavy bleeding

It's important to discuss how symptoms affect your quality of life, as this will help to explain the severity of the issue.



Explaining your symptoms

It can help to describe:

- when symptoms started
- how often they occur
- how severe they are
- whether they follow a monthly pattern
- whether symptoms are getting worse

You might say:

"I've been tracking my symptoms for several months and noticed a pattern."

"These symptoms are affecting my ability to concentrate and manage daily activities."

"I would like to explore what might be causing this and what treatment options are available."

Questions you might ask

You may want to ask:

- What might be causing these symptoms?
- Are there any tests or investigations that would help identify the cause?
- What treatment options are available?
- Why are you recommending this treatment for me?
- How will this help with my current and future priorities?
- What are the benefits and possible side effects of any treatments?
- What are the alternatives?
- When should I return if symptoms do not improve?

If you still feel concerned

If you leave the appointment feeling unsure or your symptoms continue to worsen, it is reasonable to seek further advice.

You could ask:

- whether a specialist referral would be appropriate
- whether additional tests may help
- whether there are alternative treatments to explore

Seeking answers and advocating for your health is important and you deserve to get the help and support you need.