

Scottish Systemic Vasculitis Network

Introduction

Welcome to our guide to making the most of your consultation.

We know that attending hospital appointments can be stressful and some patients with vasculitis may have waited a long time before getting a diagnosis. For some the diagnosis comes suddenly and they might be very unwell. For others, there may have been many medical appointments and tests. No two patient journeys are the same.

We encourage you to ask questions and to let the medical team know if something is troubling you. This will help you (or your family member) to better understand your illness and treatments. Sometimes you might get conflicting or confusing advice, and you should ask questions if this happens. Healthcare professionals sometimes use medical jargon, and you should ask them to explain things in a way you understand. There are no right or wrong questions. We hope the tips in this guide help you to make the most of your time with the healthcare professionals you meet.



How to make the most of your consultation

At your consultation, you and your healthcare professional will work together to understand what tests, treatments and support are best for you. This is known as shared decision-making. You may want to make some notes before or during your consultation. It is usually possible for you to have a family member or friend with you at the consultation, if you find that helpful.

Asking the questions in this booklet may help you understand your options so you can make the best decisions about your condition and treatment.



If you are getting a diagnosis, you could ask:

- How serious is this condition?
- How long will this last?
- What are my treatment options?
- Is there anything I can do myself to help manage my condition?
- Do you have any leaflets? Can you tell me where I can find out more about my condition?
- Will this affect other conditions I have?



If you need to have treatment, you could ask:

- What is the treatment?
- How effective is it?
- What are the potential side effects?
- Are there other ways to treat this condition?
- What do you think would be best for me and why?
- What happens if I don't want to have the proposed treatments?



If you need further tests, you could ask:

- What is the test for?
- How and when will I get the results?
- Who can I contact if I don't get the results?

Other questions to think about:

- Is there anyone I can speak to for more information?
- Who is my main point of contact and how do I contact them?



Things to remember



- It's normal to have to ask questions.
- Your healthcare professional will support you so you can make the best decisions about your condition and treatment.
- If you don't understand the information you are given, or if it is different from other information you have received, you should ask your healthcare professional to explain this.
- Take time to raise any concerns or issues that are important to you.
- You can write down questions before your appointment and take notes during the consultation, if you find this helpful.

Notes:

For more information on vasculitis

Visit our website at ssvn.scot.nhs.uk for more information.

Other useful websites:

Systemic Vasculitis Overview – Healthtalk.org
healthtalk.org/Systemic-Vasculitis/overview

The Lauren Currie Twilight Foundation
thelaurencurrietwilightfoundation.org

PMR-GCA Scotland
pmrgcascotland.com

BSL Contact Scotland
contactscotland-bsl.org

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