

# MY HEALTHCARE APPOINTMENT HANDBOOK



# About this handbook

This handbook has been designed to support you when preparing for, attending and reflecting on a healthcare experience. The handbook was developed to support people living in larger bodies to get the most out of their appointments. However, we hope that everyone will find this resource useful.

Everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable when visiting a healthcare professional. Although a healthcare experience requires a partnership between a healthcare professional and consumer, it is the professional's responsibility to provide a safe and stigma-free experience.

This handbook provides a series of prompts and tips to support you during your appointments, to help you to feel confident and content with the healthcare you receive. It is up to you how and when you use this handbook. You can pick and choose the sections that you would like to complete.

You may wish to:

- Complete it ahead of your appointment to help clarify your needs and preferences
- Take it with you into your appointment to remind yourself of key information
- Share it with the healthcare professional to guide your discussion during your appointment
- Share it with people you trust to help them support you in your health journey.



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## Planning your appointment

Think about who you will see, your previous experiences and what you would like to get out of your appointment.

2

## During your appointment

Have a think about what questions you would like to ask your healthcare professional. Take notes if you would like to and remember your rights.

3

## After your appointment

Reflect on how your visit went, think about your next steps, and access any resources that could support you further.

# Planning your appointment

## FINDING A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

Will you be visiting the same healthcare professional, or will you be seeing someone new? If you are looking for someone new, you might like to use a resource such as **Healthdirect**.



To search Healthdirect, click the link [here](#) or scan the QR code.

### Who will you be seeing?

You might like to record the details of the healthcare professional you have decided to see below:

Health professional's name:	
Location:	
Contact number:	
Appointment date and time:	

## RECALL

When preparing for your upcoming appointment, it can be helpful to reflect on earlier interactions.

**What went well during your last appointment?**

**What could have been better?**

## PREPARE

You might like to spend some time thinking about how you would like your next appointment to go.

**What specific areas of your health do you want to discuss at your next appointment?**

**What questions do you need answered?**

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**Is your weight a consideration or priority for you to discuss at the appointment? If so, what are your boundaries and expectations around this?**

## CHECK IN WITH YOUR PROVIDER

Before booking or attending your appointment, you might like to find out whether the clinic can provide safe and inclusive care.

If you feel comfortable to do so, you (or a person you trust) might wish to contact the clinic about whether they provide items that are suitable and comfortable for all bodies.

Some suggestions are available on the right. Are there any other considerations that are important to you? Feel free to make a note of them.

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Weight scales

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Blood pressure monitors

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Examination tables

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Waiting room chairs

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**Remember:** you have a right to be able to access the healthcare you need. Providing the right equipment and environment are important aspects of supportive, inclusive and high-quality healthcare.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR APPOINTMENT

There are a range of different things that you can do to get the most out of your appointment. You might like to consider the following:



Bringing a list of any medications and supplements you are taking. This will allow you to spend more time on what's important to you.



Booking a longer appointment if you would like to spend more time on one topic or if you have more than one thing to discuss.



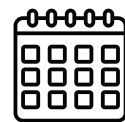
Bringing up the most important thing first, so your health professional doesn't spend all of the allocated time focusing on another topic.



Letting your health professional know at the start of the appointment if there are multiple topics you'd like to discuss.



Bringing a trusted person (friend, family member, carer, etc.) to the appointment.



Being prepared to book another appointment if you need to go back for another discussion.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR APPOINTMENT

You might wish to use the table below to list out any medications or supplements that you are currently taking:

What	Quantity	When	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medication</li><li>• Supplement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dosage</li><li>• Frequency</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Days</li><li>• Times</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prescribing doctor</li></ul>

You also might wish to use the table below to list out any therapies or treatments that you are currently receiving:

What	Quantity	When	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Therapy</li><li>• Treatment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frequency</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Days / dates</li><li>• Times</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name of health professional</li></ul>

### Bringing someone you trust



If you are able to, you might like to bring someone you trust to your appointment. A companion can provide you with support and reassurance. They might be able to help with recording or remembering information. They might also think of additional follow-up questions for your healthcare professional.

# During your appointment

## REMEMBER YOUR RIGHTS

As a consumer, you have healthcare rights, including the right to raise and discuss what is most important to you during your appointment.



You also have the right to:

- Include people that you want in planning and decision-making (such as a family member, partner, carer or friend)
- Decline to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable
- Ask questions and clarify information
- Ask for further information
- Decline any tests, treatments or procedures that make you feel uncomfortable.



To access the Charter, scan the QR code or click the link [here](#).

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights outlines the full list of rights for health consumers and carers in Australia.

Your healthcare rights are there to ensure that you receive safe, high-quality care in partnership with your healthcare professional.

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## ASKING QUESTIONS

Before you decide to get a test, treatment or procedure, you may wish to ask some follow-up questions to make sure the course of action is right for you.

Choosing Wisely Australia® have put together five questions which you might like to use to guide your discussion during your appointment.

These five questions were developed to make sure you end up with the right amount of care — not too much and not too little.

- 1) Do I really need this test, treatment, or procedure?
- 2) Are there simpler, safer options?
- 3) What are the risks?
- 4) What happens if I don't do anything?
- 5) What are the costs?



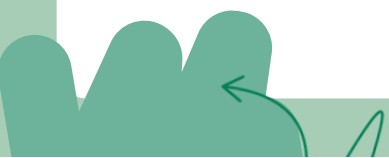
For more information, scan the QR code or click the link [here](#).

"The five questions are a conversation starter. It gets me thinking about what it is that I really need to ask my health professional about. I may not use all five, but it focuses my mind on gathering my thoughts about the things that are bothering me or worrying me."

— Debra, 2022

## APPOINTMENT NOTES

You might like use the space below to record any additional information from your appointment, such as recommended treatments, follow up tests, referrals, and any reasoning behind each of these.





# After your appointment

## REFLECT

Reflecting after your healthcare appointment can help you to:

- Work out if the healthcare professional is a good fit for you
- Determine if you received all the information you need
- Make informed health decisions going forward.

You might like to take some time to reflect on how you felt during your appointment.

### What went well?

### What could have been better?

**It might be helpful to reflect on what was talked about during your appointment.  
Were all your questions and/or concerns addressed?**



**Remember:** If you feel like you need further advice or would like to seek other options, you can always book a follow-up appointment. It is also okay to seek another opinion from a different healthcare professional.

## FEEDBACK & SUPPORT

**Are you comfortable with the decision/s that were made during your appointment?**



Whether positive or negative, you might like to provide feedback to your healthcare provider or share your experience with others. However, doing nothing or choosing to find another provider if your experience was negative are options as well.

**You might like to use the space below to make a note of any feedback that you have.**

### **Feedback, advocacy and complaints:**

- If you feel comfortable and confident to do so, you can contact your clinic to provide feedback (via phone or email) to the healthcare professional or practice manager. You also have a right to request a written response if that is something you would like.
- **Care Opinion** is an online, moderated platform where anyone can publicly share their stories about their experience of care, whether it was positive or negative.
- **Health Consumers' Council** (HCC) offers an individual advocacy service to support consumers navigate the health system and provide feedback.
- The **Health and Disability Services Complaints Office** (HADSCO) is the overarching body for all health and disability service complaints in WA. They can negotiate to provide explanations, apologies, refunds or access to services on your behalf.



For Care Opinion, scan the QR code or click the link [here](#).



For HCC, scan the QR code or click the link [here](#).



For HADSCO, scan the QR code or click the link [here](#).

## THINKING ABOUT STIGMA

If you reflect on your visit and feel that you were treated differently to what you expected, or had a negative experience, you might like to consider if **weight stigma** played a role.

Weight stigma in healthcare settings can include when any health professional, based on weight:

- displays negative attitudes or assumptions
- gives simplistic or condescending advice
- spends less time in the appointment than expected or necessary
- performs screening or diagnostic tests unrelated to your concerns, or without adequate explanation.<sup>1</sup>



Weight stigma in healthcare settings can also be subtle and not intended, such as when the physical environment doesn't accommodate for people living in larger bodies. Weight stigma stems from societal stereotypes and misconceptions around weight. It is not a reflection on you or your personal circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

**Remember, it is always your right to receive care that is both safe and respectful.**



If any of the above resonates with you, consider discussing your experience and feelings with a trusted support person, with a mental health professional or directly with your health provider if you feel comfortable to do so.

**If any of the above resonates with you, you might like to write down how you feel:**

### Do you need some support?

If your healthcare appointment has brought anything up for you, help and support are available.

**Here For You** and **BeyondBlue** offer confidential, judgement-free support. Counsellors and peer practitioners across both services will:

- listen to what is going on
- provide emotional support
- provide information on mental health and well-being
- explore coping strategies
- discuss next steps you can take and local services that are available.

#### Here For You

Call **1800 437 348**

For WA residents

7am to 10pm everyday

Link available [here](#)



#### BeyondBlue

Call **1300 224 636**

Australia-wide

Available 24/7

Link available [here](#)



## RESOURCES

For more information and support, you might like to access the following websites:

### The WELL Collaborative

The Weight Education and Lifestyle Leadership (WELL) Collaborative provides a central hub of resources and education and is building a powerful community of people who are collaborating to make change in the health and community service systems.

The WELL Collaborative provides opportunities to connect and share healthcare experiences with like-minded people who have experience of living in larger bodies, and professionals who are passionate about improving healthcare for people living in larger bodies.



For more information click the link [here](#) or scan the QR code.

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## SHAPE

Although it is not your responsibility to educate your healthcare provider, you may like to let them know of resources they can use to better support consumers living in larger bodies.

SHAPE (Supporting Holistic and Person-centred Weight Education) is an online resource hub aimed at assisting health professionals to deliver inclusive, holistic and person-centred care. SHAPE contains tools, resources and education to support healthcare providers in providing high-quality healthcare through a non-stigmatising approach.



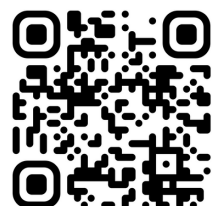
For more information click the link [here](#) or scan the QR code.

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## Check-back

Many of us leave our healthcare appointments not feeling completely certain about what was said or what the next steps are.

Check-back is a free online module developed to help consumers recall and clarify their understanding of health information received during an appointment. The module takes about 15 minutes and will help you to build your skills and confidence to check your understanding before you leave your appointments.



For more information click the link [here](#) or scan the QR code.

## Additional space for notes



### Did you find this handbook useful?

If you have any feedback or questions about the My Healthcare Appointment Handbook, you can email the WELL Collaborative via [info@thewellcollaborative.org.au](mailto:info@thewellcollaborative.org.au).

You might wish to continue using this handbook as a reminder of your previous healthcare experiences, or you might want to fill it out again when planning future appointments.

However you choose to approach your next appointment, it is important that you feel empowered to make decisions about your healthcare that are best for you.

