Preparing for a telephone or online consultation

As telephone appointments become more commonplace, we've asked patients and healthcare professionals for their advice and helpful tips in preparing for such a consultation to help you get the most out of your appointment.

In advance of your appointment

1. Make a list of any questions you may have and mention these at the beginning of the consultation. Note down all medication you are currently taking, including topical treatments, and make your healthcare professional aware of these.

2. If it is your first appointment with a doctor or nurse, they may need to know what treatments you have used in the past, for how long you used them and how effective they were, so make a note of these.

3. Ensure your healthcare professional has the correct contact number to reach you.

4. The phone call from the healthcare professional will frequently show on your phone as "No Caller ID" or number withheld and may not take place at the exact time of the previously booked face-to-face appointment.

5. Find a quiet, comfortable area where you will not be disturbed during your appointment. Try to take the call where you have a good telephone/internet connection in your home.

6. Take photographs of your psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis in case your healthcare professional needs to see them before or during your appointment

7. During the appointment you may be asked to estimate how much psoriasis you have on your body so think about this in advance.

8. Keep a note of all of your symptoms, however mild, in between appointments so you can refer to them during the consultation.

9. If you require any particular provisions to be made for your appointment (i.e. if you have hearing loss or you require an interpreter), ask a friend or relative to contact the surgery or hospital in advance to make alternative arrangements on your behalf.



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During your appointment

1. Your healthcare professional should introduce themselves clearly and will request confirmation that they are talking to the correct person. This is likely to be your name, your date of birth and the first line of your address.

2. Be honest and descriptive about how your psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are affecting you both physically and from a mental health perspective.

3. Don't be afraid to ask questions during the appointment and ask for clarification if you are unsure of the answers. Ask your healthcare professional to repeat themselves if you miss something.

4. The appointment should feel like a two-way conversation. To help you remember important details, such as information about blood tests or collecting prescriptions, you might find it helpful to ask at the end of the appointment if you can take a few brief notes about what has been said. You could also ask a friend or family member to join you and take notes on your behalf. This can help you feel more supported and ensure you don't miss any key information during the consultation.

5. Be honest about any lifestyle changes such as an increase in your alcohol or drug-use or if overeating has led to weight gain, as this may mean your treatments need to be adjusted accordingly.

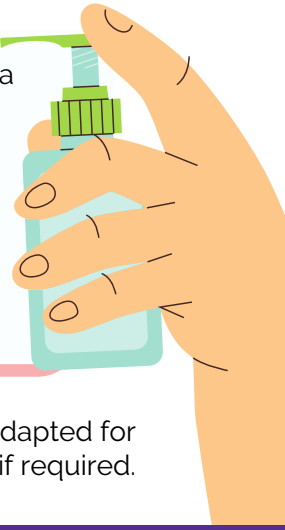


6. Treat the appointment the same as you would a face-to-face consultation, as the same amount of time will have been allocated. Relax and take your time. It is important not to feel rushed, be thorough and explain all your symptoms including how you are feeling, itching, pain and discomfort. As with face-to-face consultations it is important to ask, as well as answer, questions.



7. Be sure to mention all recent illnesses and to make the healthcare professional aware of your current circumstances.

8. The consultation should finish with a summary of the key points, a plan for further treatment and a follow up appointment, if relevant. Don't be afraid to ask questions regarding whether this will be face-to-face or over the telephone, or to ask questions about visiting the hospital or GP surgery.



This information can be adapted for face-to-face appointments too if required.

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