

## **Doctor - How to make an appointment**

### **How do I make an appointment?**

Making an appointment, what's all that about? Sounds a bit business like if you ask me. Well, its a lot easier than it sounds.

Firstly, why do you need to make an appointment? Well, some surgeries offer a 'drop-in' system, in which case during a certain time you can just drop in and see a doctor with out any prior arrangement. This is fairly unusual, so please check the Savvy Kernow site to see if your doctor's surgery runs any 'drop-in' sessions, and see what times they operate.

An appointment is often necessary because doctors get busy and an appointment system is a good way of organising their time. You can phone up to make an appointment, or go in to the surgery and speak directly to a receptionist. If you phone, a receptionist and not the doctor, answers the phone.

Before this though, you will need to think about what times are good for you to see the doctor. Have some different options because unfortunately you may not always get the time that you want. Whether you phone up, or go and see the receptionist face to face, all you need to say is that you would like to make an appointment to see a doctor. You do not need to go into the details of why you need to see a doctor. If the receptionist asks, and you feel uncomfortable telling them, politely reply 'I would rather not say'.

The receptionist probably will then ask who your doctor is. This is because when you belong to a surgery and it has several doctors, each patient is allocated to a specific one. If you don't know who yours is, don't worry. All you have to say is "I don't know". You don't have to see the doctor you are allocated to, you should be able to see any of them at that surgery. When you have organised a time and date with the receptionist, you should be told which doctor it is that you will be seeing. If there is a doctor that you don't feel comfortable seeing, then tell the receptionist this. Speaking to a doctor can be scary enough at the best of times, so make it as easy for yourself as possible. If there is a doctor you know you would like to see, ask to see that one.

### **What happens once I've made an appointment?**

Apart from the fact that you will be explaining to a stranger some pretty private things about yourself, the visit is quite straightforward. Get to the doctor's surgery in good time for your appointment, and go to the reception desk. Tell them your

name, the doctor you are booked in to see and the time of your appointment. You'll then be told to take a seat in the waiting room. Be prepared to wait a while before the doctor is able to see you. They may not be ready to see you on time, but don't worry, its not because they have forgotten or can't be bothered with you, it's because some of their other appointments have over run. Because of this, I always try to get a seat near the stack of magazines. Some of them are quite boring, so it is good to have a varied selection at your finger tips so you can pick and choose between them. Reading is a good way of calming your nerves whilst you are waiting.

Finally the doctor will call you in. When you are in with the doctor, don't forget its their job to help you. That is what they get paid to do, so don't be afraid to take your time to explain everything that is concerning you.