

## Persistent symptoms: Preparing for your doctor's appointment

Have you had symptoms for some time – but don't know what's causing them? Maybe you've already talked to a doctor about them once or even several times, and the symptoms are still there. This checklist can help you narrow down the main issues you would like to discuss with your doctor.

### Your symptoms

- What symptoms do you have?

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- Where do they occur?

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- What do the symptoms feel like? How would you describe them?

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- How long have you had the symptoms?

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- In which situations do they get worse or better? Are they always there, or do they sometimes go away completely?

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- How do the symptoms limit your daily life?

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- Do you feel stressed or mentally distressed? If so, how can you tell?

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- Have you changed your behavior and habits since the symptoms started?

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- Do you use drugs or alcohol to manage the symptoms?

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- What triggers the symptoms?

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- Can you influence the symptoms? If so, how?

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## Your medical history

- How have you managed the symptoms so far? Have you tried any treatments – and if so, which ones?

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- Which doctors have you seen so far?

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- Which medical conditions do you have now?

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- Which medical conditions have you had in the past?

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- Do any medical conditions run in your family?

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- Are you on any medication now?

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## Which questions do you want to ask your doctor?

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## What can you take along to the appointment?

- Previous findings (doctor's letters, x-rays)
- A list of medications you are currently taking, or the medications themselves
- A referral, if you need one and have it

**One other thing:** *Time with your doctor is always limited. To make the best possible use of it, it's important for both of you to focus on the questions that are most important at the time. Other questions can often be discussed at later appointments. Your doctor might also tell you about other sources of help.*