

## The Women's Guide to Getting the Most Out of Your Doctor's Appointment



**Dr Sarah Jarvis**  
GP & Broadcaster

“It's important for women to feel comfortable talking about their health with their GP. However, it isn't easy especially when it comes to discussing health concerns such as the menopause, fertility, osteoporosis and mental health.

We're calling for women to have more open and honest conversations with their GPs around the slightly more challenging conditions they may be living with. Time can be limited during appointments, so we're sharing this quick guide to help you make the most out of your appointment and get the best treatment or advice for you. ”




**Seek the right person for your appointment** – Unless you feel the need to be seen quickly, you may feel more comfortable waiting a little longer to see a GP of your choice - perhaps a female doctor or a GP you know well.



**Book a double appointment** – If you have a few issues you would like to discuss with your GP, see if it is possible to book a double appointment to give you more time.



**Plan ahead** – Before you see your GP, be clear in your own mind what you want to say. Make a note of your symptoms, worries and any questions that you would like to ask.



**You are not alone** – Discuss any health issues with friends and family who may be able to inspire you with good questions to ask your GP.



**Have dates to hand** – Whether it's when you had your last period, how long your symptoms have troubled you or when you last had sex, jot details down beforehand.



**What was your 'I've had enough' moment?** – What prompted you to decide to open up to your doctor? This is often a very powerful message and can help GPs understand what you have been dealing with very quickly.



**Prioritise and get to the point** – Let your GP know quickly which symptom(s) are causing you the most distress so they can focus on your consultation accordingly. Try to avoid other unrelated health concerns.



**Prepare for personal questions** – When talking about more sensitive issues, be prepared for your GP to ask you personal questions – it's essential to get you the help you need.



**Dress accordingly** – Wriggling out of tight trousers and layers to be examined can sometimes be embarrassing and time-consuming. Try and wear something light and easy to lift or remove.



**Work in partnership with your GP** – You know your body better than anyone else, but they have medical expertise and can bring an equally valid, sometimes different, perspective.



**If you're worried, flag it** – If you're concerned you may have symptoms of a very serious condition such as cancer, let your doctor know – they'll often explain why you can rest easy.



**Walk away happy** – Ensure you agree with, and understand the advice and recommendations given by your GP and that you are fully comfortable with your treatment plan. Leave feeling reassured.



**Don't be afraid to ask questions** – If you don't fully understand or would like to talk though alternative treatment options, your GP will always be open to help you understand things better.