



SELF HELP

Talking to your doctor: how to get the best from your consultation

Visiting the doctor can be stressful, so it is best to prepare as much as you can beforehand to ensure you get the most out of your consultation. To make life easier, we recommend you follow these guidelines:

Before the appointment:

- Try to define your goals for the visit – what do you want to get out of it? Whether it's simple answers to questions or changing treatment, knowing your goals beforehand will help you focus.
- Make a list of the questions you want to ask in order of importance.
- Make a list of the symptoms you've had and when you've had them.
- Note your medical history and your family's including other autoimmune conditions, miscarriages, strokes, heart attacks and thrombosis.
- Make a list of all your current medication, vitamins and supplements.

During the appointment:

- If you can, bring along a support person as it's a good idea to have help to remember what was said and remind you of any questions.
- Explain the extent of your knowledge. Your doctor may assume you know nothing about your condition, and perhaps you don't, but do let them know if you've been doing some research so you can start off from the right level.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions or say you don't understand. Doctors are only human and sometimes forget that others don't always understand medical terms. If you are unclear about anything, ask for leaflets which you can take away and read in your own time.
- Listen actively and pay attention to what the doctor is saying. If you are planning your response while they are speaking, you are likely to miss vital facts and instructions.
- Take notes as it can be difficult to remember the answers to your questions and any instructions you are given (particularly for Hughes/antiphospholipid syndrome patients with memory problems).

During a consultation, the information you receive is very personal and likely to affect you emotionally so, before you leave, try to ensure that you have:

- Understood all the information and instructions given to you and have made a record of these.
- Have a clear understanding of what should happen next, when and by whom.

When you have a condition like Hughes/antiphospholipid syndrome, you are the most important member of your healthcare team. Doctors are not always specialists, they care for a large number of patients and can only spend a limited amount of time with you. Therefore, it is important that you try to learn as much as you can about your condition so you can help them treat you.