

Your next meeting with the healthcare system can change your life ...



Consultations with a doctor or a healthcare professional are conversations that require collaboration.

Each of you relies on the other's information in order to reach the right diagnosis and treatment.

Therefore, it is important that besides listening, you also feel comfortable speaking your mind.

This guide aims to help you do just this.



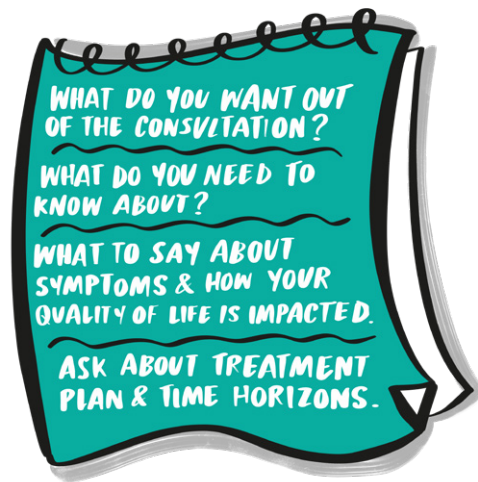
This guide is developed by patients and relatives, who have experienced being in vulnerable situations themselves, where it was difficult to speak up during conversations within the healthcare system – in cooperation with The Danish Society for Patient Safety.

BEFORE

Before your consultation in the healthcare system **prepare yourself** and consider bringing a companion.

1-2 days before your consultation: Get your notes ready by using this sheet as preparation. Read the speech card on the next page – and print it if possible. It can be used to support and guide you through your consultation.

Prepare yourself before the consultation



- You can use terms such as: 'How... How long... When... Why... Who...'
- You can also ask: 'What other diagnoses have you considered? What else might it be?'

Prepare what you wish to say during the consultation

- 'I am here, because... /I feel... /I experience...'
- 'The course of the disease until now has been...'
- 'For me this means... /the consequences for me...'

Do not go to the conversation by yourself – if possible, bring someone along!

It is a good idea to bring a family member, a friend, or a neighbor, who can support you in the process. You can also contact SocialSundhed.org or the DaneAge Association aeldresagen.dk, who can help you find a companion.



- Agree upon what is important for you to get out of the consultation.
- Agree upon how your companion can best support during the consultation.

Consider the use of a diary and if necessary, record the conversation

- It can be helpful to write down your symptoms and agreements in a diary/logbook, so you can return to it later.
- You can take notes before, during and/or after the consultation or ask your companion to do it.
- If you would like to record the conversation, please tell your doctor that it will help you remember what you have agreed upon, or that listening to the doctor's explanation for a second time may help you.

Do you have several visits planned in the healthcare system?

Accept that you sometimes must repeat yourself. You can actually benefit from this. It gives you the possibility to adjust and prioritise what you say the next time.

- Look at your notes/in your diary.
- How have you been since the last time?
- Adjust what you wish to say for the next time.



DURING

During your consultation in the healthcare system be aware of your role – **listen and speak up.**

Read notes and the speech card just before your consultation

This you can do before or while you are in the waiting room, so it is fresh in your memory.

At the consultation you can put the notes and speech card on the table or just keep them on you in case you need them. Remember that you may also use your telephone for recording. Knowing that you are prepared can in itself be helpful.

Be aware of your role

Do the thing you are best at. Tell about your situation, your symptoms and how they influence your everyday life. Do not attempt to come up with your own diagnosis or bring suggestions for treatment or the diagnostic process. Stick to what you know and let the doctor contribute with his/her part to the collaboration.

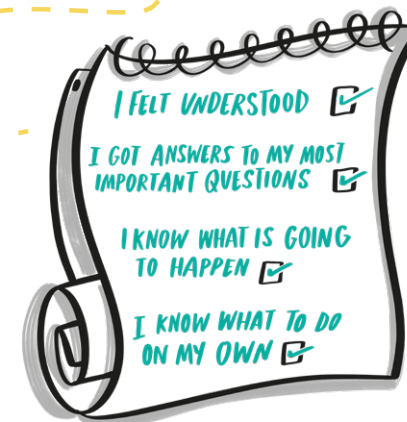


SPEECH CARD

- Introduce what you have prepared.
- Listen and ask questions if you have doubts.
- Mention if you feel misunderstood.
- Optionally, ask for time to look in your notes or use your companion.
- Optionally, ask the doctor where to find additional information about the disease, examination, or treatment.
- Make sure that you and the doctor have understood each other. Wrap up the conversation with:
'I have understood that... This is what is going to happen now...'

Did you get what you needed from the consultation?

Point out if there is anything from the following to which you feel you cannot say 'yes.'



If necessary, **write notes** directly after the conversation while it is still fresh in your memory.

AFTER

After your consultation in the healthcare system **keep track** of which agreements have been made – react if there is anything that becomes unclear.

Follow up on the consultation

It can be a good idea to reflect on the consultation when you get home, if possible, with your companion.

Doing so can help you track your ailment and give you an overview of what has been agreed.

- Write your agreements down (if you did not do so during the conversation).
- For a better overview of your appointments, test results and referrals as well as your hospital records, go to sundhed.dk.
- Contact your doctor via mail, telephone, or the app "Min læge" if there is something important that has been overlooked, misunderstood or that you do not understand.



How to ask

Ask courteously for any clarification you still require in order to avoid negative communication. Say, e.g.:

