

Preparing for Your GP Appointment: Making the Most of Your Visit

Being well-prepared ensures you get the information and support you need. Here's how to make your consultation productive:

Before Your Appointment

Document Your Symptoms

Write down your symptoms before you visit—it's easy to forget details in the consultation room:

- Physical symptoms (hot flushes, night sweats, joint pain)
- Emotional/mental symptoms (mood changes, anxiety, brain fog)
- Duration and impact on daily life

Key Information to Share

Your doctor needs a complete health picture:

Medical History:

- Current health conditions
- Medications you're currently taking (including supplements)
- Previous surgeries, especially hysterectomy
- Any blood clotting issues or heart problems
- Mental health history

Family History:

- Breast/ovarian cancer in family members (with ages at diagnosis)
- Heart disease history
- Osteoporosis in family members
- Any known genetic mutations (BRCA, etc.)

Lifestyle Factors:

- Smoking Status
- Alcohol consumption
- Exercise habits
- Diet and weight
- Stress levels

Essential Tests and Health Checks

Baseline Blood Tests:

- Cholesterol and blood pressure (cardiovascular assessment)
- Thyroid function (symptoms overlap with menopause)
- HbA1c (blood sugar • over 40 indicates prediabetes, over 50 diabetes)
- Vitamin D (deficiency causes fatigue, depression, weight gain)

Physical Assessments:

- Weight, BMI, waist-hip ratio
- Heart examination and blood pressure monitoring

Ongoing Screening:

- Mammograms - every 2 years from age 45 (you'll receive invitations)
- Cervical screening - continue as per national guidelines
- Bowel screening/colonoscopy - as recommended for your age group
- Regular dental checkups - gum disease links to heart disease and stroke

Key Questions to Ask

About MHT:

- Am I a suitable candidate and what type do you recommend?
- Why body-identical hormones vs synthetic?
- How will we determine and adjust my dose?
- How often will you monitor my progress?
- What should I expect in the first few months?

About Overall Health:

- What lifestyle changes would you recommend?
- Should I make dietary changes or take supplements?
- What exercise do you suggest?
- When should I schedule follow-up?

What to Expect from Your Appointment

A good consultation includes:

- Thorough discussion of symptoms and their impact
- Review of medical and family history
- Physical examination (blood pressure, weight, etc.)
- Discussion of suitable MHT options
- Clear explanation of your specific benefits and risks
- Monitoring plan and follow-up schedule

If Your GP Is Hesitant

Unfortunately, not all GPs are current with MHT guidelines. If your doctor seems reluctant or cites outdated concerns:

Mention that NICE guidelines recommend MHT as first-line treatment

Ask for referral to a menopause specialist

Request a second opinion

Consider seeking care from a GP with menopause expertise

Don't accept "you're too old" or "just put up with it" as answers

Follow-Up Care

Once you start MHT:

3-month follow-up to assess your response and adjust if needed

Annual reviews to monitor benefits, side effects, and optimize treatment

Continue regular screenings:

Blood pressure and cholesterol monitoring

Mammograms every 2 years

Cervical screening as scheduled

Bowel screening/colonoscopy as recommended

Regular dental checkups

Report concerning symptoms promptly—don't wait for scheduled appointments

Remember: You're entitled to evidence-based care and informed discussions about all treatment options. Your health and quality of life matter. Don't be discouraged if the first conversation doesn't go as planned—persistence and preparation are key to getting the care you deserve.