

Referral/Consult Appointment Guide for Patients

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL – Bring this guide with you to your physician appointment. It provides you with some important questions to ask your doctor or care team if you are being referred to another doctor (specialist). Its goal is to help you know more about your health and treatment plan.

ASK YOUR REFERRING PROVIDER

Your family doctor is a specialist in family medicine and will refer you to specialists in other fields if necessary for your care. When a request is sent to specialists in other fields, it is called a **REFERRAL**.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR REFERRAL

- ☐ What kind of specialist am I seeing and why?
 - » Is it to diagnose, treat, manage or do a procedure?
- ☐ Is this referral urgent or routine?
- ☐ How long is the wait to see the specialist?
 - » Are there other options to reduce wait time?

ABOUT MY SPECIALIST APPOINTMENT

Your family doctor or nurse practitioner may not have all the information regarding the specialist appointment at the time of the referral.

- ☐ Some questions to ask regarding your specialist appointment are:
 - » What is the specialist name and address?
 - » Who will tell me about the appointment?
 - » How long should I wait to call back if I have not heard anything about this referral?
 - » Who should I call if I haven't heard anything?
- ☐ Do I need tests or lab work before the specialist appointment?
 - » How soon can I get these tests done?
 - » Will the specialist get my test results before I go?
- ☐ Should I keep a diary or notes of my symptoms or concerns?

OTHER

- ☐ What are we doing now to treat my symptoms until I see the specialist?
 - » If my symptoms get worse, who should I call?
- ☐ Where can I go for more information?
 - » Is there a website or resource you can give me?

**It's YOUR
HEALTH.**
Be a part of it.
Ask questions.

What Happens Next

- » Your referral goes to the specialist's office.
- » Lab tests or imaging reports may be required before your specialist appointment.
- » The specialist's office may contact you regarding your appointment with any special instructions.

ASK YOUR SPECIALIST

A specialist is an expert in their medical field. For example, a doctor who focuses on skin, nail and hair health is called a dermatologist. Your family doctor sent you to see a specialist because they think you need a doctor who is an expert to diagnose or treat you.

DURING YOUR CONSULTATION

- ☐ What do they think is going on? Is there a diagnosis?
- ☐ Are there any other tests you need to do to confirm this?
- ☐ Could this be something else? If so, what?
- ☐ How will this affect me and my life?

ABOUT YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

- ☐ Are there any treatments?
 - » Can I start now?
 - » What if I can't pay for my treatment plan or medication?
- ☐ What are the benefits and risks for this treatment?
- ☐ What are my other treatment options?
- ☐ What if I choose to do nothing about this? Is there any risk?
- ☐ How will I know if this treatment is working?

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- ☐ Who will be checking my treatment?
- ☐ Do I have to see you again? If so, when?
- ☐ Should I keep a diary or notes of my progress?

FOLLOW UP

- ☐ When will my family doctor get your report?
- ☐ Will the report include my treatment plan?
- ☐ Where can I go for more information?

These are some questions to ask during your visit. **Not all will apply to you.**

Tips for Your Specialist Appointment

- **Check the location and parking options before leaving.** Ask how long you will be at the specialists office so you choose the right type of parking (meter vs parkade) and bring enough money.
- **Bring a list of medications and allergies to your appointment.** Talk to your specialist about them and make sure they know what medication you are taking and what you are allergic to.
- Make sure you **complete all required tests** before your specialist appointment. If you are unable to complete your tests, talk to your family doctor or call the specialist's office before your appointment. **Check your results on [MySaskHealthRecord](#).**
- You can **ask questions**, so bring them with you. You can use the **Appointment Guide for Patients** to help you prepare.
- If you have **a symptoms journal**, bring it with you to discuss with the specialist. You can also research your symptoms to know more before your appointment. Check out Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) **[Check your Symptoms](#)** page.
- **Plan for your visit.** Bring a translator if needed, arrange transportation, and parking. Collect all your notes and arrive early.
- **Take notes** during your appointment. You could **ask a friend or family member to join you**. They can help make sure you get your questions answered and can focus on listening to your doctor during the exam.
- **It's OK to say "No."** It's your health. If you are not happy or if things are not clear, tell the specialist.
- **Be open and honest.**

Tips for Your Care Plan/Disease Management

- **Your treatment plan is your roadmap** to improving your health.
- Your treatment **plan includes** information on what illness you may have, what your doctor will do (like prescribe medicine to you) and what you will do, like change your diet.
- **The better you understand, the better equipped you'll be** to follow through on it every day.
- If something doesn't make sense or you are unable to follow doctor's instruction, be sure to talk to your doctor. **Speak up, it's your health.**
- If you have more questions or are confused after you leave, **make sure you know who to call to get more information.**

You and your doctors are a TEAM that works together to keep you healthy.

Know and understand your health issues to make the right choices for your care plan.

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