

Statewide Persistent Pain Management Network



Persistent Pain Education Series

More Information and Tips

Living with persistent pain is challenging, however, there are people who can help you find your way around what can sometimes be a complex healthcare system

My rights and responsibilities

People who seek or receive care in the Australian health system have rights regarding the nature of care described in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, including:

- Access
- Safety
- Respect
- Communication
- Participation
- Privacy
- Comment

To obtain a copy of the charter visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au or call (02) 9126 3600.



Getting ready to see my healthcare professional

Visiting your healthcare professional plays an important role in helping you to understand and manage your persistent pain. The strategies mentioned below can assist you with making the most of your time when visiting your healthcare professionals.

How to prepare for my appointment

- Think about what the **main matter** is that you wish to understand in your visit.
- **Be prepared** with items required for your visit (e.g. x-rays, list of medications or questionnaire).
- Make a **list of questions to ask** your healthcare professionals.
- Include any questions you have about information from your last appointment.
- Share with your healthcare professionals your **progress or difficulties** about the advice given to you at your last appointment.
- Request a **longer appointment** if you think you need it.
- Ask your healthcare professional about **bulk billing arrangements**.

Tips for talking with me healthcare professional

- Get to know your healthcare professional.
- **Acknowledge** what you are feeling and thinking.
- Take a **support person** with you.
- Talk to your healthcare professional about what is happening for you.
- **Use words like 'I feel that ...'** rather than 'you...' statements.
- Seek a second opinion if you feel this is necessary.



What can help me in my appointment?

- **Be specific about your needs.**
- Think about the words you can use to **describe what is happening to you**. For example, you could describe your pain as throbbing, itchy, hot, cold, stabbing numb, sharp, pounding, tight, burning, tender or tingling
- Consider:
 - **How often and how long** does it happen for?
 - **How much** does it hurt?
 - What **activities** are easy or difficult to do?
 - What activities increase or decrease your pain?
 - What is your **sleep pattern**?

During my appointment

- **Listen carefully** to what is asked of you
- Share what has been a challenge and what has worked well
- You might ask:
 - What do I need to do?
 - Why is it important for me to do this?
 - What can I expect?
- Use your list of questions as a reminder of what to ask



Tips to remember

Everyone deals with their persistent pain differently and below are some tips you might find useful:

- Recognise that not all stress is bad. Stress can be motivating, and can encourage you to **take care of yourself**.
- **Don't try to cope alone**, coping is not about being superman/woman – many factors may not be within your control, and accepting that is part of coping. Try to be objective and look at how other people cope. Always seek help if you or your loved ones are finding it hard to cope.
- **Know your inner resources and strengths** and use these to manage your pain.
- Be realistic and don't set yourself **goals** which are too difficult.
- Think about trying **different solutions to a problem**. Don't panic if the first solution is not successful.
- Take one step at a time, and learn to **prioritise** what is important.
- Practice **relaxation** and **plan enjoyable activities**.
- Maintain self-care.

My notes

You can record information discussed with the staff of the Persistent Pain Service or members of your Community Support Team here:

Date	Discussion with	Topic	Key messages and actions
Notes			