



Becoming the Doctor-Patient

Tips for a Successful Relationship with Your GP

A trusted GP is not only essential for your well-being but a professional prerequisite and benefits our workplaces and our patients. However, for many doctors, being a patient can feel like uncertain territory. This is a simple guide to assist you navigate being a doctor-patient.

DHASWA recommends an annual check-up with your regular GP to maintain your health and plan for expected well-being challenges.



Why Do Doctors Need Their Own Doctor?

Despite recommendations, only 40–50% of doctors have a regular GP due to barriers like stigma, confidentiality concerns, and self-reliance. Many manage health issues themselves, which can result in inadequate risk assessment and poor health outcomes. Regular GP visits offer independent assessments for safer, more comprehensive care.

The Importance of a Regular GP:

General Practice is founded on holistic and patient centred care. **DHASWA** doctors appreciate your health knowledge and background as a colleague in the WA health system; including the benefits and challenges in this unique relationship. Seeing your GP regularly provides you with opportunities for regular preventative care, access to the GP's clinical networks and referral base, the security of medical records, and the ability to see your GP at short notice if you are known to the practice.

DHASWA recommends continuity in care. Attempt to see one, or two GPs, or use only one practice; care fragmentation can lead to errors.

Booking with your Doctor



Finding the Right GP

Choosing a close contact can complicate confidentiality, objectivity and your relationships. Consider using our Doctors Access List, seek recommendations from friends or family, look at referring doctors who interact with your healthcare or ask for recommendations from fellow doctors who are in general practice. If the first doctor does not seem the right fit for you, seek out another GP.

If using the Doctors Access List, please let the receptionist know you are a doctor referral to access prioritised care arrangements.

Plan in Advance

Plan in advance for routine care visits; many good practitioners have long wait lists for new patients. Consider scheduling a regular appointment e.g. around your birthday to assist recall.

Access Issues

Most doctors on our Doctors' Access List will offer prioritised appointments with direct communication of your medical identify.

We recommend booking via phone, identifying as a "DHASWA referral"/ doctor referral to facilitate prioritisation.

Urgent Issues

If you feel you need a more urgent appointment than you are able to book, please call the **24/7 Advice Line on (08) 9321 3098** for assistance. We will return your call within 4 hours.



Preparing for your consultation

Allocate Appropriate Time

For initial or multiple issues, book a long consultation (30–45 minutes).

Explore Consultation Options

Some practices offer extended hours, weekend appointments, and telehealth

Professional Status

We recommend you disclose your background to enable holistic and tailored care incorporating your health literacy.

Avoid Collegial Interactions

While peer support and professional debriefing are valuable, maintain focus on your healthcare needs. Collegiate issues and informal discussions can be reserved for a designated time—such as briefly at the start/consult conclusion—to help preserve clear therapeutic boundaries and ensure clinical priorities are addressed.

Write it Down

Summarise your medical history, current concerns, and have specific questions ready to keep consultations focused. A comprehensive medical history example from MIGA can be found [here](#)).

Rural or Remote Considerations

In rural/remote areas, independent GP care may not be practicable. It's important to set clear boundaries between personal/treatment relationships. Scheduling GP appointments while visiting a major center can help ensure Medicare telehealth options are available

Establish the Doctor-Patient Relationship



Address Assumptions

Preconceptions of global medical knowledge can impair informed care. Consider asking for patient-level explanations despite your pre-existing medical knowledge. Requesting a “Pitch low and aim high” approach of information exchange can be useful.

Clinical Role Definition

Clarify specific boundaries around self-management, referrals, cc'd results, follow-up care and avenues of communication.

Shared Decision-Making

Decide how much input and control you want in your care planning, while respecting your GP's expertise and their objectivity.

Urgent Care

Establish contingency plans for emergency or urgent care, including communication pathways.

Billing

Avoid misunderstandings by clarifying fees and billing policies during your initial consultation.

Common Concerns & Confidentiality



Medical Board Notification

- GPs are only concerned about unsafe practice harming the public.
- There is **no Mandatory Reporting** for treating practitioners in Western Australia**
- Working with your GP to manage risk behaviours obligates the need for Medical Board involvement in the treatment relationship
- Information is not released to your university, employer or other party without your consent, or in rare exceptional circumstances.
- You can request for consult notes to be confidential to one doctor only

Privacy

If you have concerns about identification by colleagues or patients, you can inform practice staff. You can also inquire about who will be consulting when you are present and request to wait in a more private area, outside or your car.

Information Security

Express if you have any concerns about privacy. Your information is confidential and cannot be viewed by other staff. Some software can provide additional confidentiality allowing only one particular practitioner to see aspects of the medical record.

Here to help



Many GPs consider caring for their peers a privilege, a service to the profession and this can lead to high levels of satisfaction for both parties. A trusted GP provides holistic support, helping you sustain your health and, your ability to care for others.

Urgent Care

If you cannot arrange a timely GP appointment, and need urgent help, contact **DHASWA's 24/7 Advice Line on 08 9321 3098** and we can assist you access care appropriate to your needs.

Speak with one of our experienced GPs within 4 hours.

If you cannot wait 4 hours, are unsafe, unwell; attend an Emergency department, or other emergency care.



dhaswa

doctors' health advisory service
western australia

24/7 DHASWA Advice Line (08 9321 3098)

DHASWA Resources



Urgent Enquiries: 24/7 Advice Line

(08) 9321 3098

Speak doctor to doctor within 4 hours.



Doctors Access List

dhaswa.com.au/doctors-access-list/



DHASWA: Non-urgent enquiries

manager@dhaswa.com.au



Visit us at: www.dhaswa.com.au



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