

## TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR DOCTOR



*People living with a chronic illness often need to make changes to their everyday lives. The examples in this brochure are meant as a guide only. We hope you find some of these useful.*

**Everyone needs a doctor who listens to them, to whom they can talk, and who is respectful and concerned for them as individuals. People may need their doctor for many years, so developing a good relationship is important.**

### HOW CAN IT WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR DOCTOR?

#### IN GENERAL

Everyone has the right to choose a doctor with whom they feel comfortable and safe, and they have confidence in. Some people want a doctor close to where they live; some are happy to go to a big practice and take 'pot luck'; some want a different doctor for their hepatitis C health issues and some change doctors frequently.

**It is the doctor's responsibility to give people information in a way they can understand.** If there is something that a person does not understand, they should ask for the information to be repeated, and ask questions if they need.

**It is a person's responsibility to tell a doctor about any past or current health-related problems,** as well as any medications a person may be taking including any herbal supplements and complementary therapies. Keeping a notebook or diary so that they can note unexpected or unpleasant treatment effects is useful. **Write down questions that you need to ask your doctor about at your next visit.**



#### *What do I need from my doctor?*

- *Support for long-term health care needs*
- *Reviewing and monitoring of my health on a regular basis*
- *Recognition of when I need more investigations*
- *Recognition of any need for psycho-social support*



If a person is unable to keep an appointment it is courteous to let the doctor know ahead of time. Some doctors will charge for missed appointments. If needed, people should take someone with them to their doctor's appointment.

### IN PARTICULAR (HEPATITIS C)

Before someone starts treatment, the specialist and GP will want assurance that the person will stick with it to the letter. As a general rule, it is good to have the phone numbers of the clinic and the GP, so that if there are problems associated with the treatment between appointments, a person can still discuss their concerns. If a person is seeing the GP to get test results, they can ask the receptionist to make a 15 or 30-minute appointment.

### SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR GP OR SPECIALIST BEFORE OR DURING TREATMENT

- How serious is my condition?
- What does the treatment do?
- What are its benefits? Is it a cure?
- What are the risks? Are there side effects?
- What if I don't have treatment, are there any other options?
- How long do I have to decide?
- How much will treatment cost me?
- Will I still be able to work whilst having treatment?
- Do I need to tell anyone?
- Where can I get support?

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