



Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service

INFORMATION SHEET



DOCTORS ARE HUMAN BEINGS

How often do we feel as though we are at a disadvantage when sitting in the chair in front of our G.P.'s desk?

Even those trained in professions such as nursing, psycho-therapy etc, still feel this barrier of ineptitude when it comes to having a reasonable discussion about the state of their health with their doctor. Of course, we are usually feeling unwell to either a lesser or larger degree – but still we sit with that feeling of being totally inadequate when trying to describe our symptoms. In many cases, especially with females, this can lead to tears – not only as a result of the pain felt but more likely, total frustration.

There are many ways in which we deal with this problem. First of all, looking at your G.P. with “new eyes”. Recognise them as yes, hopefully, the best trained medic in the world, but also as the man or woman that they undoubtedly are – first and foremost, a human being with their own problems. Hopefully, their own experience as people gives them the insight into our own problems.

You might like to consider writing down your symptoms (as this eliminates wasting the few precious minutes allotted to us in the consultation). Also, always go to your G.P. prepared for examination. Give yourself confidence – clean body, clean underwear is not always for your doctor's benefit – but for your own self esteem and self worth. (If you feel unable to do this and feel too ill, then you should request a home visit).

The manner in which you treat your doctor will reflect in the way he or she treats you. Don't use your G.P. as a handy pill dispensing machine. There are many conditions which may not require drug therapy, and there are other therapies and a lot of management which you should be able to do for yourself. If you are given drugs – remember to ask about possible side-effects, and ask if there are other alternatives which may be kinder to your body. Remember, not everyone has the same chemistry and as the saying goes – *“one man's meat is another man's poison”*.

Always discuss your condition and treatment as fully as possible, and, most importantly, on an equal basis of responsibility. You are ultimately responsible for your own good health – your G.P. is there to help you maintain it.

As mentioned before, discuss, but do not argue. This means that you can disagree, but give your reasons for disagreeing politely and firmly. If you resort to shouting and becoming abusive, you are the one causing harm, to yourself, and to the kind of relationship you should have with your doctor. Remember that your G.P. will be providing you with what you NEED not what you think you WANT.

There is a lot of talk these days about the cost of your treatment, and as patients we cannot help but be aware of this issue. It is regrettable that the NHS is slowly turning the clock back to the quality of care depending upon the ability to pay. Payment is sought either through G.P. funding, or you being able to purchase private treatment.

One example of “costing” has come to light recently. Cancer patients in the lower socio-economic groups have poorer treatment and worse expected outcome than those in higher earnings brackets. Ergo, more deaths from cancer are recorded from those on lower incomes or unemployed strata. Naturally, poor diet, along with alcohol and cigarette addition comes into this picture also, emphasising once again that the main onus falls on the patient to maintain their own good health wherever possible.

Overcoming the feeling that you were costing your G.P. too much is very hard in present circumstances. However, one should always be suspicious of a health care provider that puts costs before the welfare of its patients.

As a patient, you have many rights according to the famous ‘Patients’ Charter’ brought into force within the last few years.

These rights were supposed to give you confidence in receiving the correct treatment at the right time. But, in reality, whilst largely this confidence is met within health care services, there are many occasions when people have fallen through the net of the caring services.

It is not always cost which causes the tragedies that we seem to read and hear about more frequently, but often a lack of communication, misinformation and in lots of instances, no information at all, between any party.

We cannot blame the G.P. service entirely as, on the whole, they provide an excellent service. Instead we must look to our society and the age in which we live in to answer our misgivings. Again the onus falls to us to help ourselves...and we do!

We form support groups, we gather knowledge and we pass this knowledge and experience onto others so they may compare and contrast our personal symptoms with their own. Most importantly we share this knowledge with our G.P.s in order to educate them with our invaluable knowledge about “our” condition.

If you do have a problem with your health care services, contact the CATS office where we can suggest possible lines of advice and guidance.

C.A.T.S RECOMMENDS YOU ALWAYS SEEK YOUR DOCTORS ADVICE

Disclaimer

The purpose of this information leaflet is to help those suffering with thyroid disease. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that the information given is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by CATS and it is recommended and essential, that if in any doubt about your condition, that you should always contact your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice