

# Communicating with Health Professionals

Communicating your story many times when you have a physical disability can be frustrating - while health professionals want to engage in the best way possible, they often have limited time to get to know all the people they have to see.

In a hospital setting, their time can be particularly limited. Many people with physical disabilities have expressed their frustration with having to repeat their story so many times.

There are several ways to facilitate better communication with health professionals. First, it's important for your health information to be compiled into a concise document that can be shared, for example a Communication Passbook or 'book about me'.

Family, support staffs, a therapy team and GP can assist in creating this document, which will help health professionals understand medical background, medication history, treatment recommendations, referrals, activities, likes and dislikes and other relevant details.

## Tips for health appointments

- A list of medications and health concerns should be prepared in advance and taken to appointments. These can be saved on a communication device if needed.
- A Communication Passport or 'book about me' and communication profile and dictionary should be taken to every appointment. These should be handed to the health professional at the start of the appointment.
- Use your communication board or book or device or prompt cards.
- A trusted friend, family member or support worker should be taken to every appointment, to help if needed.
- Notes should be taken at every appointment - if help is needed to take notes, the health professional or support person attending the appointment can assist.



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