Preparing for a visit to the doctor

There are a few things you can do to get the most out of your visit to the doctor (or other health professional). When you make the appointment, some things to mention are:

» If you would like an interpreter – a professional interpreter can be arranged.
» If you want to see a male or female doctor.
» Whether you would like a long appointment so you have more time to talk to the doctor.

Health information can be hard to understand. Sometimes there is a lot to remember. It can be helpful to have a list of questions and write down the answers the doctor gives you.

For example, you might want to ask:

» What do you think is causing my pain?
» What are my treatment choices?
» How well does that treatment work?
» What are the side effects?
» How long will it take the treatment or medication to work?
» How should I take the medication?
» Why should I have that test?
» When should I come back to see you?
» What can I do to help myself?
» Is there anything else you think I should know?
» Who can I call if I have questions?

It can also be helpful to take someone with you to the appointment for support and to help you remember information.

In between visits, keep track of the medication you take and any side effects you have. A list of your symptoms can also be helpful. Some tools to help you prepare for your doctor’s visit are available on the National Pain Week website.

www.nationalpainweek.org.au

Remember:

Ask your doctor or other health professional to explain words you don’t understand.

Take your list of questions and write down what you need to remember.

Tell the doctor what you heard. Then ask if you got it right.