

Hints and Tips for talking to your Neurosurgeon and/or Neurologist

Some of this advice is important whether the appointment is by telephone, some makes more sense if your meeting is in person, some of this advice works in both situations.

1. PREPARATION (1) – Agree your discussion points for during your appointment and have them already rehearsed. This should be done with a person who knows you and how your condition is treating you, that way you are familiar with what you want to say and how to say things.
2. PREPARATION (2) – Prepare a list of your discussion points to have with you during the appointment so that you can tick off each item as it is mentioned and ensure that nothing you want to discuss is missed.
3. MEDICATION – Know what medication you are taking and when. If you have changed doses since the last appointment make sure that this is clearly mentioned to the specialist including why and when this happened, even if this was done under his/her advice
4. APPOINTMENT LENGTH OF TIME – Don't worry about how long you think the appointment should be/how long you have to talk. It is up to the specialist to manage the time just make sure you say and ask everything that you need to, don't feel rushed.
5. IN PERSON SUPPORT – Have someone with you. At present this is difficult but if required could they be on the end of a phone during the appointment if you are with a specialist and they can't be there?
6. PHONE SUPPORT – For phone appointments we recommend speaker phone mode so your support can be near you and hear everything. That way they can add information you may miss.
7. BODY LANGUAGE – If your appointment is face-to-face making sure you maintain eye contact with the specialist. How you say things (tone, speed of voice etc.) and how you look when saying things is very important when trying to get your message across to another person. 90% of our understanding is not what we say but how we say it.
8. YOUR UNDERSTANDING IS IMPORTANT – If you don't understand ask the specialist to repeat what he/she has said. You can even try to repeat back in your own words what has been said to test your understanding. The specialist should correct anything you get wrong.
9. QUESTIONS - Remember there is no such thing as a silly question. You should feel free to ask anything you need.
10. INFORMATION – We would suggest that after the appointment you make some notes on what has happened and what was said. Also, we suggest it is best to get a copy of the letter from the hospital reviewing the appointment so that you can query/correct anything that you do not agree with and ensure that you are happy with all the information on file with your hospital specialist and GP surgery.