

General
Medical
Council

A patient's guide to good medical practice



Good medical practice means
how doctors should work with
their patients.

**Easy
Read**

Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information about how doctors should work with their patients. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



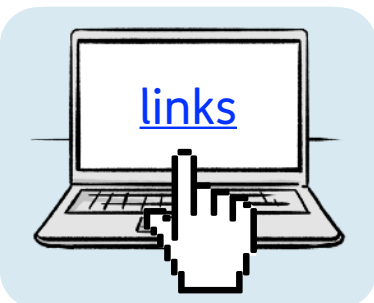
This Easy Read document uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the document.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites. You can click on these links on a computer.

What is in this document

About this information	4
Standards	5
How should my doctor treat me?	6
What else doctors must do	18
If something goes wrong	23
Find out more	32

About this information

General
Medical
Council

We are the **General Medical Council (GMC)**. We are the organisation that says what skills, knowledge and behaviours doctors should have.

We have written this guide to explain:



- What **good medical practice** is.

Good medical practice means how doctors should work with their patients.



- How your doctor should treat you.



- How you and your doctor can work together to make sure you get the right care for you.

Standards



Standards are rules that explain how all doctors should work and behave.



Doctors in the UK have to follow our standards when they work.



They should think about our standards when they are caring for patients.

How should my doctor treat me?

Making choices about your care



Your doctor should treat you kindly, fairly and with respect.



They should:

- Listen to you.
- Work with you to decide what is most important to you.



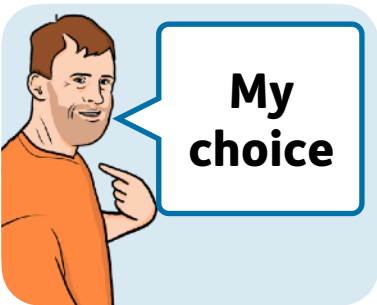
Your doctor must give you information that helps you to:



- Understand your health.



- Understand what types of care you can get.



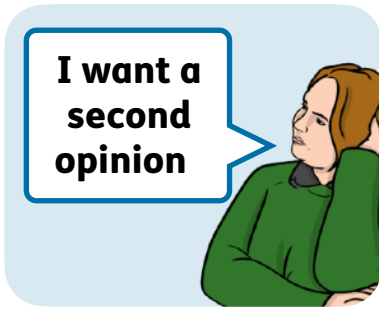
- Make choices about your care.



It is important that you agree to any care you get.



If your doctor wants to use information about your health to teach other doctors, they must ask you first.



If you think your doctor is not caring for you in the right way, you can ask for a **second opinion**.



A **second opinion** is when a different doctor says what care they think you should get.



If your doctor needs help, they might ask another doctor what they think.



This doctor might ask you about the care you are getting.



They will help you and your doctor decide what to do.

Being fair



Your doctor should not treat you badly or unfairly because of who you are, like because of your disability or race.



Even if your health condition means that you could harm them, your doctor should try to care for you.



They might do this by wearing gloves or masks.



If they still cannot care for you, they will find other ways to make sure you get the care you need.



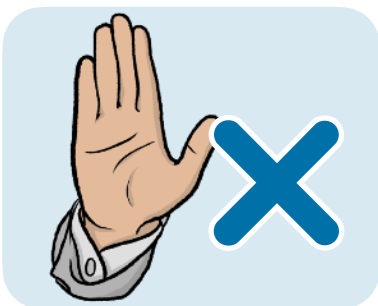
Your doctor will care for the people who need it most, first.



Even if they think you have made yourself ill, this will not stop them from caring for you.



Sometimes, your doctor might not agree with the type of care you want, like if their religion says it is wrong.



But they cannot stop you from getting this care, if it is right for you.



They need to make sure that you know how to get this care from another health service or doctor.

Treating you with kindness and respect



Your doctor should talk to you in a kind way.



Even if they have to tell you things that might be sad or hard to hear, they will not hide this from you.



They should listen to what you think about your own health and what is important to you.



They might not do all the things you ask for, but they should tell you why.



Your doctor should think about whether you are **vulnerable** - this means you might need help and support to stay safe and well.

If your doctor thinks you might be vulnerable, it is important that they:



- Think about what you need to stay safe and well.

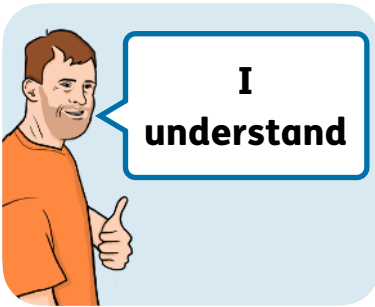


- Work quickly to help you if they think you might be unsafe at home.



If you are really sick and your doctor cannot make you better, they must still try to make you comfortable and take away any pain.

What you need



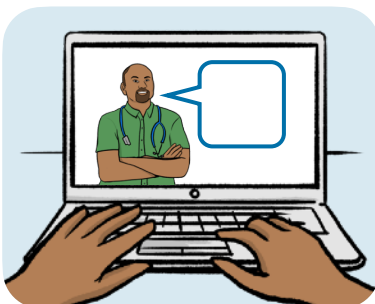
You and your doctor need to be able to understand each other.



This helps you make good choices about your care.



Doctors should ask you what support you need. This could include help with talking to them or understanding information.



They should give you good care, even if you talk to them on the phone or computer.



Different doctors have different ways of doing things.



Some may speak to you online or over the phone.



Others might see you in person.



They should always see you in a way that is safe.



If you need to see the doctor in person because of a disability, they should try to see you.



If they cannot, they should tell you about other doctors or services that can help you.

Medical records and sharing information



Medical records are notes your doctor keeps about your health.



It is important that doctors get all the information they need from your medical records.



Other health and care staff might need to see your medical records so they can help you.



Your medical records will be kept private. Staff will only be able to read them if they need to.



You should tell your doctor if there is information about your health that you do not want to share with other health staff.



They will leave the information out if they can.



But they might think that they need to share the information.



If they decide to share the information, they should tell you why.

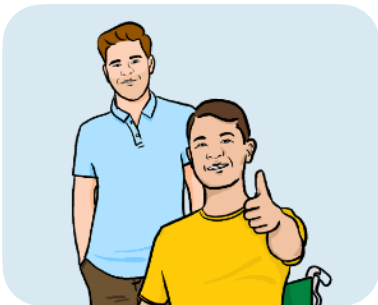


Usually, your doctor will not tell your family or friends about your health unless you say it is okay.

But the doctor can talk to your friends and family about your care if:



- You cannot make choices about your care for yourself.



- You want your family and friends to help with making choices about your care.

What else doctors must do

Behaving well



You should be able to trust your doctor.



Doctors should tell the truth about what they know and what they can do.



Many people trust doctors a lot.



So it is extra important that doctors do not treat people badly.

Learning



We expect doctors to keep learning, so that they have the right skills to help people.



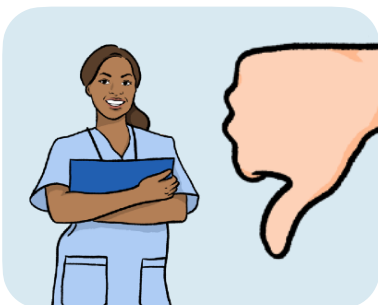
Doctors should help other doctors to learn more.



Sometimes, you might get care from a medical student - this is someone who is training to be a doctor.



Medical students can only learn to become doctors by helping real people.



But you can say 'no' if you do not want a medical student to care for you.

Conflicts of interest



A **conflict of interest** is when a doctor might make a choice because of what they want, not what you want.



It is important that your doctor does what is best for you, not them.

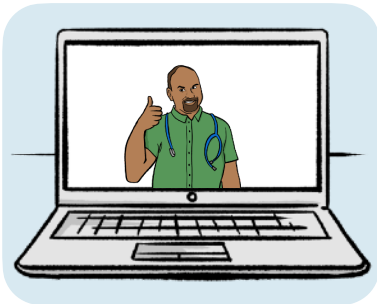


If a doctor has a conflict of interest, they should speak up about it.

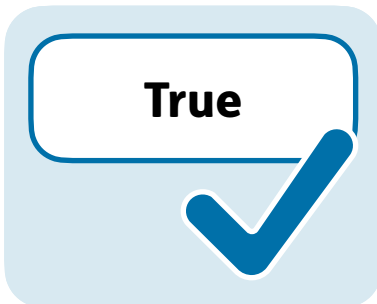
Speaking as a doctor



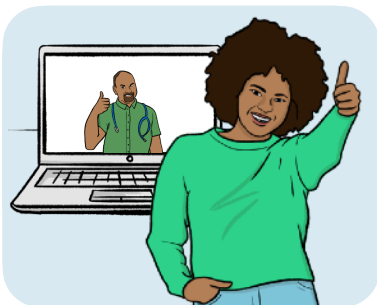
Sometimes, doctors might share information about health and care.



This could be online, like on Facebook or Twitter, or in an advert.



If they do this, they must make sure that the information is true, correct, and does not leave out anything important.



This means you will be able to trust what doctors tell you.

Emergencies



In an emergency, like a car crash, doctors can often help people.



But they might not have the right skills to help everyone.



If they do not have the right skills, they should get help from someone who does. This might mean calling an ambulance.

If something goes wrong

Safety

If your doctor thinks you are not safe, they must:



- Try to make you safe.



- Speak up about what they think is not safe.



- Ask for help from other members of staff.

If something goes wrong with your care



If things go wrong, your doctor should tell the truth to you about what happened.



If they can, they should fix the problem.



They should say sorry, and explain what has happened.



They should also speak up about what has happened.

How you can speak up



Every 5 years, doctors must ask patients about ways they could improve.



You can help them, by filling in a survey. It is best if you are fair and tell the truth.



If you see something that you think is not safe, you should tell a member of staff.



Tell your doctor if you think your medicine is making you ill. They will speak up about it.

Complaining about your doctor



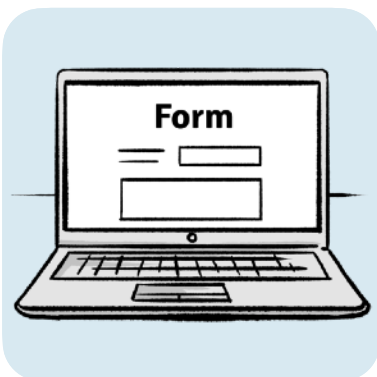
You can make a complaint about your doctor.



Usually, you should do this to your local GP or hospital.



If you have a serious complaint about a doctor, you can also speak to us.

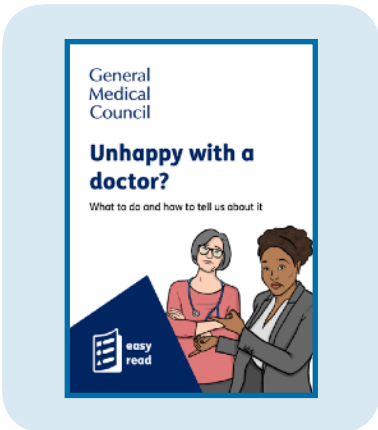


The easiest and quickest way to tell us you are unhappy is by filling out the online form here:

www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/raise-a-concern



If you would like help to tell us about why you are unhappy with your doctor, please call: 0161 923 6602



Click on this link to go to our website and read an Easy Read guide to complaining to us:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/gmc-site/concerns/3274-gmc-concerns-about-a-doctor-easy-read-v2.pdf>

You can also talk to organisations that help patients. There are different organisations in different parts of the UK:

The logo for Healthwatch, featuring the word "healthwatch" in a sans-serif font. The "h" is blue, "ealth" is green, and "watch" is blue. The "a" in "watch" is replaced by a green speech bubble icon.

- In England, you can speak to Healthwatch England:

www.healthwatch.co.uk/

The logo for the Patient and Client Council. It features the text "Patient and Client Council" in a pink sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller black font, is the tagline "Your voice in health and social care".

- In Northern Ireland, you can speak to the Patient and Client Council:

pcc-ni.net/

The logo for the Patient Advice & Support Service (PASS). It features a blue rectangular background. On the left, there is a white speech bubble icon containing a question mark and an exclamation mark. To the right of the icon, the text "Patient Advice & Support Service" is written in white sans-serif font.

- In Scotland, you can speak to the Patient Advice and Support Service:

<https://pass-scotland.org.uk/>

The logo for Llais. It features the word "LLAIS" in a large, bold, green sans-serif font. To the right of the word is a red speech bubble icon. Below the word, in a smaller black font, is the tagline "Your voice in health and social care". To the left of the tagline, in a smaller black font, is the Welsh text "Eich llais mewn iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol".

- In Wales, you can speak to Llais:

www.llaiswales.org/

If there is a complaint about a doctor



If you tell us you are not happy about what a doctor has done, we must find out what has happened.



We need to find out if the doctor is putting people in danger.

We look at:



- How well the doctor does their job.



- How they behave.



- If they have an illness that means they cannot care for their patients safely.



- If the doctor is following our standards.



Once we have looked at these things, we will decide what we need to do.



When we look into a complaint about a doctor, they must help us with this.



This includes telling us the truth about what happened, and if they can stop it from happening again.



Your doctor must not treat you differently even if you have complained about them.



They will only stop caring for you if either you or your doctor think that they cannot give you good care any more.

Find out more



If you need more information you can look at our website:

www.gmc-uk.org



Or you can contact us by phone:

0161 923 6602

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