



## Choosing a GP

Choosing a GP is one of the most important decisions you will make about your health. Your GP looks after you when you are sick but is also able to identify any potential problems which may affect your health in the future and help you to take steps to prevent or manage them.

GPs may develop special interests or expertise in a variety of areas such as:

- Families
- Children
- Older people
- Counselling
- Looking after people with chronic conditions, such as asthma or diabetes

Everyone has an opinion about what makes a good GP. You might like to ask family or friends for recommendations, ask questions and look around, but remember only you can decide which GP is right for you.

When you find a GP you are comfortable with, here are some tips to get the most out of your visits:

- Make an appointment for your visit – remember to ask for a longer appointment if you have several problems you want to discuss
- Make sure you tell your GP all your concerns no matter how 'big' or 'small'
- Think about what you are going to say; when did the problem start, what are your symptoms, what makes it worse or better?
- Know your past health history, medicines (including over the counter ones, vitamins or other supplements), allergies, operations and if possible any family history eg. diabetes
- GPs will respect your privacy. They will not discuss your problems with anyone else unless your permission has been given. Don't be afraid to try a couple of GPs to find one you are comfortable with or like. Once you have found a GP, be sure to continue to visit them for all your health needs as this will ensure the continuity of your care.