

Information about a patient's health & consent

- Where appropriate ask patients who have carers whether they are happy for their personal health information to be given to their carer
- Give carers information about the diagnosis, the treatment – including medication and its side effects – and prognosis for the people they care for
- Obtain consent from all parties involved eg:

I agree to information about my health being discussed with my carer. I will contact the practice if this information changes.

Patient and carer signatures

Carer's name:

Patient's name:

Patient's illness or condition

In the presence of

Health professional:

Name:

Role:

Date:

Phone:

Signed:

Signature of patient

Date signed:

What can I expect from my general practice to help me improve my health and quality of life?

Once your practice knows you are a carer, should you need additional support you can be referred to specialist carers agencies or social services.

You are entitled to ask your local social services department to assess your needs as a carer. They will take into account how they can help you to continue in your role as a carer so that you are best placed to make your own choices about recreation, work or study.

Do not neglect your own health. If you need to see your GP they may be willing to provide a home visit or to take other steps to make it easier for you to keep your appointment.

Sourcing support from Community/District Nurses

If you are caring for someone needing a level of nursing care, you can ask for assistance from your Community/District Nursing Services. This can be organised through your general practice.

The most commonly-asked questions by carers tend to focus on:

- Welfare and benefit entitlements
- Understanding benefits and health rights for carers
- Sourcing breaks and respite care
- Sourcing practical support in the home
- Administering medicine
- Assistance with intimate/personal care
- Finding further advice from charitable or carer-led agencies

To find your nearest Carers' Centre contact

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Head Office
142 Minories London, 020 7480 7788 or info@carers.org

Wales, 104 Mansel Street, Swansea, 01792 472 908 or info@carers.org

Scotland, Charles Oakley House, Glasgow, 0141 221 5066 or infoscotland@carers.org

Northern Ireland, Belfast Carers' Centre
028 90434700 or information@carerscentre.org



CARERS IN PRACTICE

A partnership between the Royal College of General Practitioners and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers to support the health needs of carers. If you are looking after someone, this leaflet may help you.

www.rcgp.org.uk

www.carers.org

The Carers in Practice partnership between the Royal College of General Practitioners and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is an initiative which will provide you, the carer, with the support you need from your GP or health centre. To enable your doctor to better understand your caring responsibilities, the partnership is also offering guidance to GPs.

This leaflet provides you with key questions you might like to ask your doctor. If you are not sure that you are a carer but *are* looking after someone, you may find it helpful to speak with your local Carers' Centre for friendly advice. Please see the back of this leaflet for agencies providing further help.

Do you look after someone with an illness, frailty or disability?

If so, you are a carer and might welcome support from your general practice.

This support could reduce the stress of your care-giving role and help you continue to give the quality of care that is necessary. It could make you a partner in care with your GP and the healthcare team they work in.

You may also need support for yourself – to look after your own health and to ensure that you have time for yourself.

Why should I tell my GP I am a carer?

So that your GP and the staff at the practice can provide you with help and support.

How does this affect the patient I am looking after?

Your GP Practice wishes to improve the quality of patient care by listening and communicating with patients and their carers. This will involve working with the patient or their carer and a member of the primary healthcare team.

Who will see my patient's medical record?

This information is for use by medical professionals in your practice, but may be given to a hospital if the patient is admitted.

Who else will be told about my caring role?

Anonymous statistics may be compiled to help plan additional services for carers.

When can I identify myself as a carer?

You do not need to wait until you see your doctor, you can fill in the form at the end of this leaflet and hand it into the receptionist.

How can I make sure the GP is willing to share information about the person I care for?

Where appropriate the person you care for needs to give their consent. The patient confidentiality form at the back of this leaflet should be signed by you as their carer, your GP/practice nurse and the person you care for. If they are unable to sign, speak with your GP. Often consent will be implied if you accompany them when they see their GP.

What if the person I care for is registered at another practice?

It is still worth filling in the form so that you can access personal help from your own GP. It may also be possible to form a link between the two practices. Why not talk it over with your GP or Practice Nurse?

What can I expect from my GP to help me to continue caring?

Your general practice may be able to arrange home visits which will make keeping appointments easier. If a home visit is not possible, they may be able to give you a more convenient appointment and keep waiting time to a minimum.

You can ask for home visits from other healthcare staff if you are providing intimate nursing care. Your GP will often have information on services you may find useful eg local Carers' Centres who can provide benefits advice and/or training in managing the medical condition of the person you care for.

How do I get the help I need when seeing my GP or another healthcare professional?

As a carer you need information to help you care. The information you have about the person you care for will help your GP to provide the best support for both of you.

It is worth preparing a list of what you need to know and the type of information you can share so that you can make effective use of both your and your GP's time which may be limited.

Remember to ask for contact details of agencies who can support the person you care for should you face a medical emergency.

