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a series of fact sheets written  
by experts in the field of liver  
disease

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## *Being an Effective Healthcare Consumer: Medical Appointments*

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***Time spent seeing your healthcare provider is short. Here are some tips on how to set up a good appointment.***

- Mondays and Fridays are often busier than the rest of the week. The best times to call for appointments are usually between 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
  - Have your medical provider number and calendar on hand.
  - If seeing your medical provider on time is important, ask for the first appointment of the morning or afternoon.
  - If your condition is complicated or if having extra time is important to you, explain this at the time you make the appointment. It can be frustrating to find out that you were scheduled for a 10 minute time slot when you actually needed 45 minutes.
  - You may also try asking for the last appointment of the day. However, keep in mind that you may have to wait longer because if others arrived late, that will accumulate by the end of the day.
- Also remember that on really busy days, your medical provider may not have had a minute to eat or sit down. Even if you are sick, try to be considerate.
- When making the appointment, state if the appointment is routine or urgent. If you think it is urgent, be prepared to explain why you think so. For instance, “I have been vomiting for the last 24 hours” is urgent. “For the last two years I get a mild stomach ache every time I eat” may feel urgent but it probably isn’t.
  - If the appointment you are given seems too far in the future, ask if you can be put on a waiting list if there are any cancellations. Cancellations are more common than you might think.
  - Confirm your appointment a few days before and then keep the appointment. It is amazing how often people don’t show up for appointments.
  - Be on time. Being early is even better. Planning to arrive 15 minutes early is a good rule of thumb.
  - If you know you are going to be late, call the office. Sometimes you can still be seen.
  - Be prepared to wait. Bring something to occupy yourself. There are lots of reasons why medical providers can run behind in their schedules.
  - If your provider seems habitually late, call in advance and see if he or she is running behind. If appointments are running an hour behind, ask if you can arrive 45 minutes later than your scheduled time.
  - Don’t take it out on the staff. If you have been waiting excessively long you can request a reason. Good manners go farther than irritability.
  - If you know in advance that your time is short, tell the staff when you arrive or even call in advance. If you have an appointment and need to be across town in two hours, say so. Explain, “Something has come up and I need to leave here by such and such time. Have I allowed enough time to see the doctor?”

- If your provider wants you to return for a follow-up, make the appointment before you leave the office. Ask the staff to write the date and time down on a card with the office phone number so it is handy should you need to change the appointment.
- If you need to change or cancel an appointment, try to do so at least 24 hours in advance. Remember that other patients may need that time slot.

***Be Sure to Check Out the Other Factsheets in This Series:***

- *Calling your Healthcare Provider*
- *Choosing a Healthcare Provider*
- *Getting Organized for the Health of It*
- *Maximizing Your Medical Appointments*
- *The Medical Alphabet*
- *Medical Appointments*
- *Medication Guidelines*
- *Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Professional*
- *Tips for Lowering Prescription Drug Costs*
- *Your Medical History*

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- Medical Writers' Circle
- Hepatitis Journal Review
- Disability & Benefits Column
- Hepatitis B information
- HIV/HCV Coinfection information
- Support Group Listings for USA, Canada and Elsewhere
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  - \* Easy C Facts
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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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