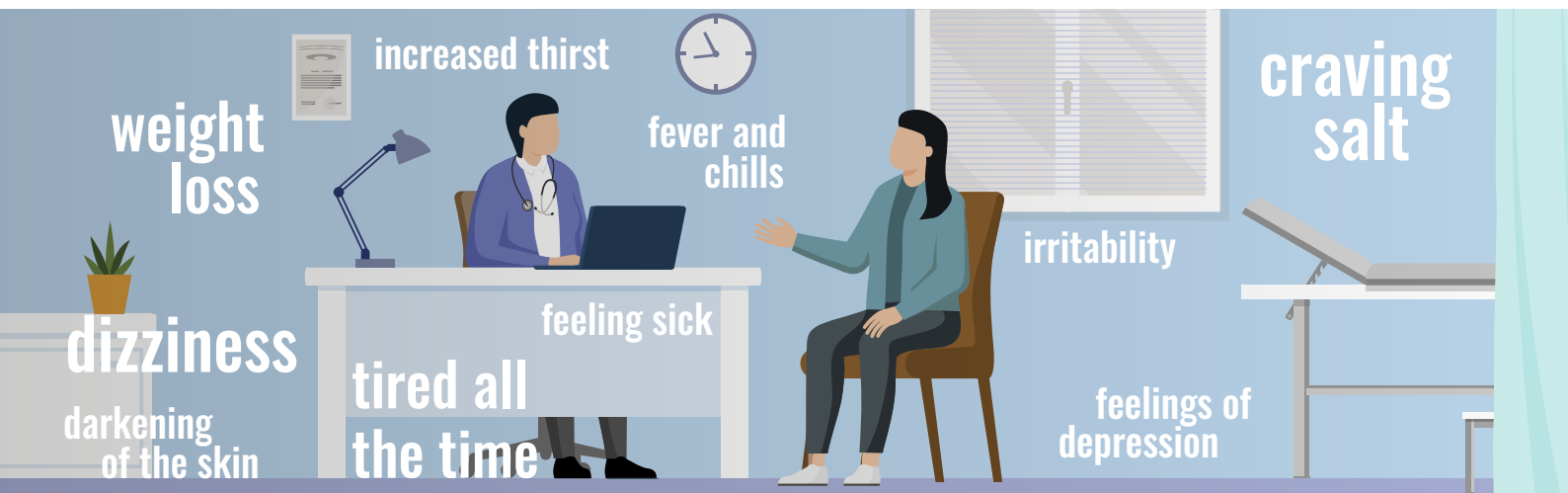


This non-promotional leaflet has been created by Pharmanovia to aid the patient consultation.



## Living with symptoms of Addison's disease?

### SPEAK TO YOUR GP

This discussion guide will help you plan and prepare for your appointment with your GP to help make sure all your questions are answered.

Use it to help you make notes in advance of your appointment and to describe your symptoms. You can then download the guide onto your mobile or print it to take with you when you talk with your GP.

# 1

## Planning for your GP appointment:

If you, or your friends and family, notice you are unwell or have symptoms, don't dismiss these concerns. Make an appointment with your GP. You can always bring a friend or family member to support you at your appointment.



**Thinking about your appointment beforehand can help you think more clearly about your conversation. Planning this in advance also helps you and your GP get the most out of your consultation.**

- Download this guide onto your mobile or print it and take it with you as you may want to refer to it, or take notes, during your consultation
- Be prepared to answer questions about your medical history and your family's medical history
- List or bring any medicines and supplements that you are taking
- Keep a symptoms diary to track your symptoms and how you feel, whether anything makes them better or worse, and try to remember when they first started
- You may be able to book a telephone or video appointment if it is difficult to get to the surgery in person
- Make a list of any questions or problems you wish to discuss. There may be limited time in your appointment, so ranking your concerns can help

**Before you go for your appointment, you might find it helpful to:**

- Discuss it with someone you know and trust
- Practice what you want to talk about or ask your GP
- Have someone else with you to help you remember everything you want to ask and to take notes



Your notes:

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## 2

## Symptom checklist:

**Your self-identified symptoms are (tick the symptoms you are experiencing):**

- |                                                                                            |                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling tired all the time –<br>overwhelming exhaustion (fatigue) | <input type="checkbox"/> Craving salt                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of appetite and unintentional<br>weight loss                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Abdominal pain                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Darkening of the skin<br>(hyperpigmentation)                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Weakness of the muscles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling/being sick (vomiting and<br>nausea)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased thirst                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Low mood - feelings of depression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fever and chills (a higher<br>temperature than normal)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Body hair loss in women           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Low blood pressure (hypotension)  |
|                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating          |
|                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches                         |
|                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>        |

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN  
EXPERIENCING THESE SYMPTOMS?**

**HOW ARE YOUR SYMPTOMS  
IMPACTING YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE?**

**ILLNESS HISTORY:**

Certain historical illnesses can also mean that a diagnosis of Addison's disease may be more likely. These include:

- There's a history of autoimmune disease such as Addison's disease in your family
- You have Type 1 diabetes (your body not producing insulin)
- You have vitiligo (pale white patches on the skin)
- You have hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid gland)

*Remember, if you are experiencing a number of the **symptoms** or **risk factors** listed above, it is important to speak to your GP about Addison's disease.*



## 4

## During your GP appointment:



At the start of the appointment, set out what you would like to discuss



Be direct. If you have a problem that you find difficult to talk about, don't leave it to the end of the appointment before mentioning it



Take your time to explain what you are going through – this will help your GP get a better idea of your current situation



Provide the list of symptoms that you have been experiencing. It may help the GP to understand these if you also talk about the impact that they are having on your day-to-day life (work, childcare, relationships, housework etc.)



Don't be afraid of talking about emotions as that will give your GP a full picture of how you are feeling and the impact on your life



Don't be afraid to ask your GP questions. If you don't understand something, ask your GP to clarify what they mean or explain it differently



It may also help you to take notes during your appointment



Remember that your GP is there to help you

**Act early if you feel something is wrong and you are experiencing some of the symptoms associated with Addison's disease. You know your own body better than anyone.**

Addison's disease is a rare disease, so your symptoms may well be associated with other conditions.

Your GP will ask questions about your symptoms as part of your assessment to rule out, or refer you for further testing to see if you have, Addison's disease.

- If the condition is suspected on the basis of your symptoms or risk factors (and urgent treatment is not indicated), your GP will carry out an early morning serum cortisol test which is a simple way to help confirm or rule out whether you have Addison's disease.

## 5

### Next steps



Ask your GP about what the next steps are. You can also ask what to do if things get worse.



Be prepared to book another appointment if you need more time to discuss your symptoms.



It can be helpful to talk to your friends or family about what happened during your appointment. This may be an ongoing conversation and following up with your GP is important.

## 6

### Further resources



[www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/what-to-ask-your-doctor/](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/what-to-ask-your-doctor/)

**Pharmanovia**

 [www.instagram.com/addisons\\_aware](https://www.instagram.com/addisons_aware)

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