

General  
Medical  
Council



Easy  
Read

# A patient's guide to good medical practice



**Good medical practice** means how doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates should work with their patients.

# Easy Read



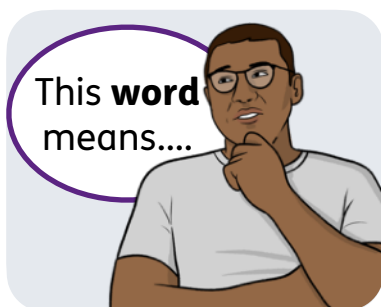
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



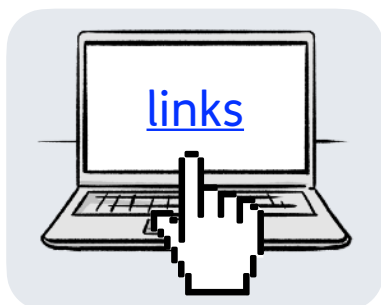
This Easy Read document uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



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 booklet.....	4
Standards.....	6
How your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate should treat you .....	7
What else doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates must do .....	20
If something goes wrong .....	25
Find out more .....	34

# About this booklet

General  
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This booklet is from the General Medical Council (GMC).



We support doctors, **physician associates** and **anaesthesia associates** to give good, safe care to patients.



**Physician associates** are part of the team that cares for patients.

They are **supervised** by doctors - that means that doctors support them to do their job well.



**Anaesthesia associates** are part of the team that stops you from feeling pain when you have an operation.

They are supervised by **anaesthetists**. **Anaesthetists** are doctors in charge of stopping you feel pain when you have an operation.



We have written this guide to explain what **good medical practice** is.

**Good medical practice** means how doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates should work with their patients.



That includes:

- How your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate should treat you.



- How you and your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate can work together to make sure you get the right care for you.

# Standards



We set rules that explain how doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates should work and behave.

These rules are called **standards**.



Doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates in the UK have to follow the standards we set when they work.



They should think about the standards we set when they are caring for patients.

# How your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate should treat you

## Making choices about your care



Your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate should treat you kindly, fairly and with respect.

They should:



- Listen to you.

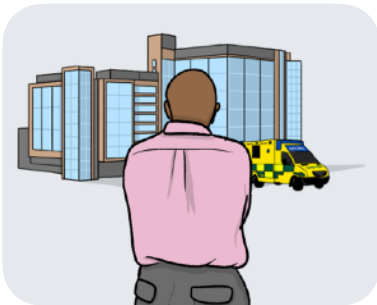


- Work with you to decide what is most important to you.

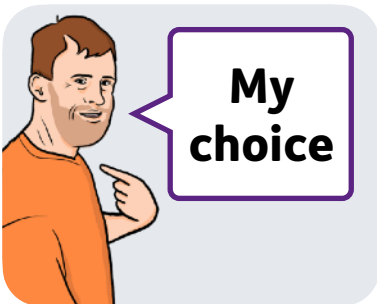
Your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate must give you information that helps you to:



- Understand your health.



- Understand what types of care you can get.



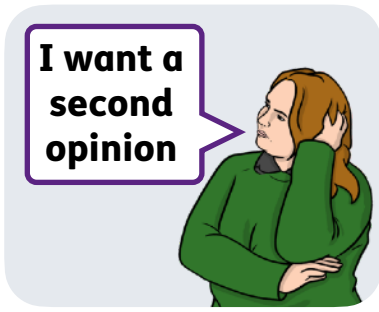
- Make choices about your care.



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



If your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate wants to use information about your health to teach others, they must ask you first.



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



A **second opinion** is when a different doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate says what care they think you should get.



If they need help, they might ask another doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate what they think.



This doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate might ask you about the care you are getting.



They will help you and your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate decide what to do.

## Being fair



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



They should always try to care for you, even if your health condition means that you could harm them.



They might do this by wearing gloves or masks.



If your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate still cannot care for you, they will find other ways to make sure you get the care you need.



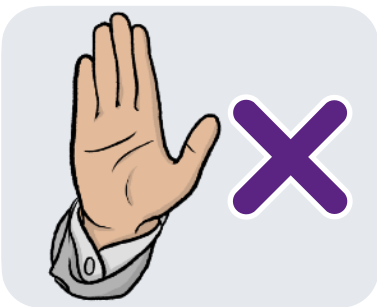
Your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate will care for the people who need it most, first.



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



Sometimes, your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate 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, doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate.

## Treating you with kindness and respect



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

If your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate thinks you might be vulnerable, it is important that they:



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

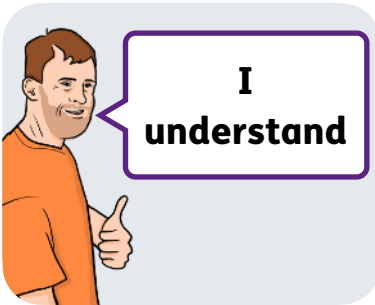


- Work quickly to help you if they think you might be unsafe at home.



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

## What you need



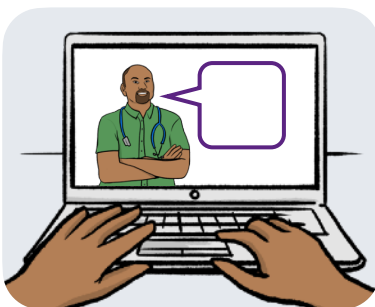
You and your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate need to be able to understand each other.



This helps you make good choices about your care.



Your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate 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, physician associates and anaesthesia associates 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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate in person because of a disability, they should try to see you.



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

# Medical records and sharing information



**Medical records** are notes that doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates keep about your health.



It is important that doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates 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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate 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.

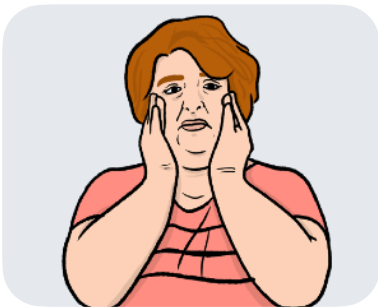


If they decide to share the information, they should tell you why.



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

But they 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, physician associates and anaesthesia associates must do

## Behaving well



You should be able to trust doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates.



Doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates should tell the truth about what they know and what they can do.

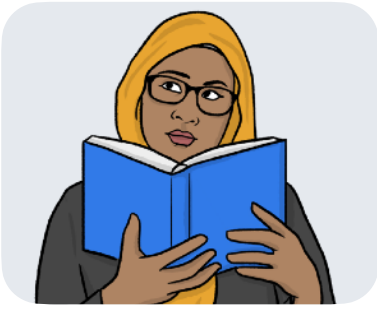


Many people trust doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates a lot.



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

## Learning



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



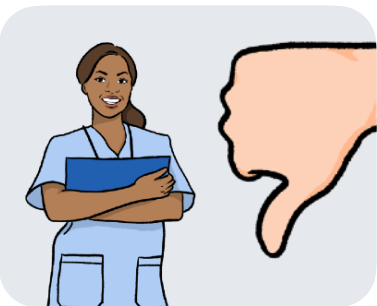
They should help other doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates to learn more.



Sometimes, you might get care from a student who is training to be a doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate.



Students can only learn to become doctors, physician associates or anaesthesia associates by helping real people.



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

## Conflicts of interest



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



It is important that your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate does what is best for you, not them.



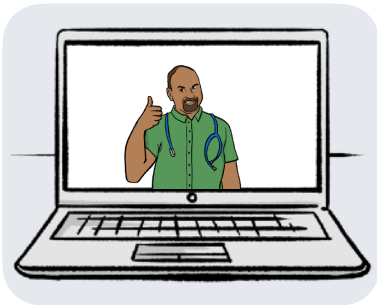
**I have a conflict of interest**

If a doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate has a conflict of interest, they should speak up about it.

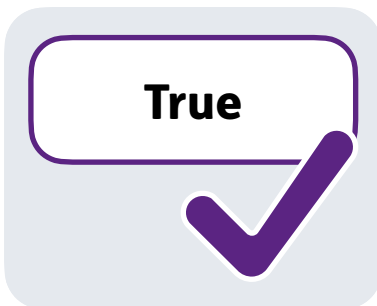
## Speaking as a doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate



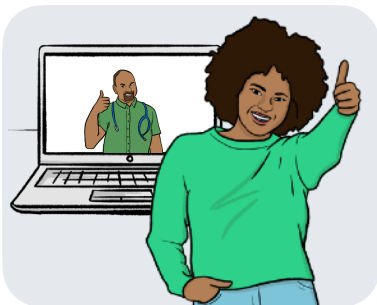
Sometimes, doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates might share information about health and care.



This could be online, on social media 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, physician associates and anaesthesia associates tell you.

# Emergencies



Doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates can often help people in an emergency, like if there is a car crash.



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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate 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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate should tell you the truth 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.



Physician associates and anaesthesia associates may also ask you 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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate if you think your medicine is making you ill. They will speak up about it.

## Complaining about your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate



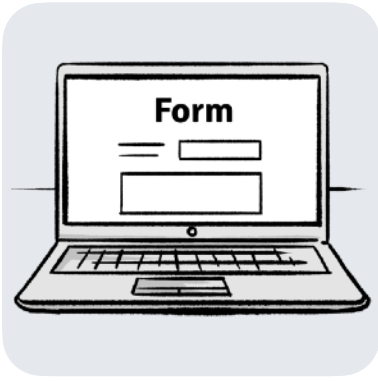
You can make a complaint about your doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate.



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



If you have a serious complaint about a doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate, 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](http://www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/raise-a-concern)



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



Click on this link to go to our website and read about how to complain to us:

[www.gmc-uk.org/concerns](http://www.gmc-uk.org/concerns)

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



- In England, you can speak to Healthwatch England:

[www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)



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

[pcc-ni.net](http://pcc-ni.net)



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

[pass-scotland.org.uk](http://pass-scotland.org.uk)



- In Wales, you can speak to Llais:

[www.llaiswales.org](http://www.llaiswales.org)

# If there is a complaint about a doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate



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



We need to find out if they are putting people in danger.

We look at:



- How well they do their job.



- How they behave.

We also look at whether the doctor, physician associate or anaesthesia associate:



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



- Is following the professional 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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate, 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, physician associate or anaesthesia associate:



- Must not treat you differently even if you have complained about them.

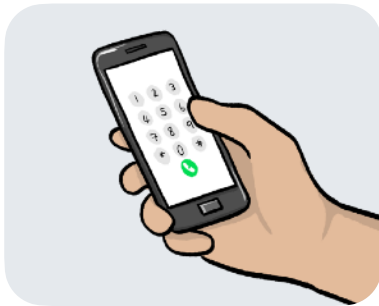


- Will only stop caring for you if either you or they think that they cannot give you good care anymore.

# Find out more

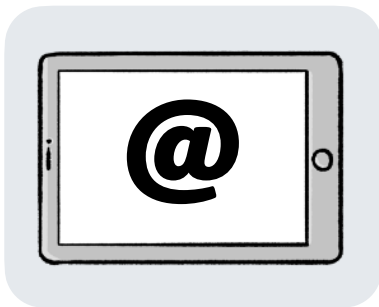


You can look at our website here:  
[www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)



You can contact us by:

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