

Communication with healthcare personnel



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As a deaf person, here are some strategies to communicate effectively with healthcare staff and ensure they understand your needs



Inform them that you are a deaf person

From the start, **let** healthcare staff **know that you are deaf person**. Specify your **preferred communication** method: sign language? lip-reading? residual hearing?

If there is no screen or visual system to indicate turns, ask them to signal you visually when it's your turn.



Carry medical identification

Carry a **note** with your ID stating that **you are a deaf person** and any other important **medical information**.

This can be helpful in an emergency, especially if you cannot communicate due to fainting or another reason.

Information about you



Bring important information about yourself

If possible, before going to the health center, write down the following information on a note or on your phone:

- **Reason** for visiting the health center.
- Main **symptoms** you are experiencing.
- **Medication** you are taking.
- Family **medical history**.
- Any other information you consider **important**.
- **Key information** from your medical history:
 - Allergies.
 - Previous major illnesses.
 - Past surgeries.



Having this information can help facilitate your care, especially in an emergency.

Information about you



Indicate how they should contact you:

Explain to staff how they can get your attention

- **Touch your arm or shoulder** to alert you.
- Move an arm or hand within your line of sight.
- Use a light signal, if available.

Let them know what you need in order you can clearly understand the information

- A **clear view** of the space where you are.
- **Good lighting** for better visibility.
- **No obstacles** between you and the other person.
- Avoid using anything that hinders lip reading, such as masks or chewing gum.
- **Not turning** their back while speaking.



Accessibility solutions



Ask about accessibility solutions

Inquire if they have any of the following aids to enhance communication:

- **Sign language interpreter** (in-person or via video).
- **Hearing loop system** (for deaf people who use hearing aids).
- **Technical aids** compatible with hearing aids and cochlear implants.
- Apps for converting **speech to text**.
- **Paper and pen** to write messages.
- Pictograms, charts, or images.



Request sign language support

- If there is no healthcare staff with at least B2.2 competence in sign language, **request an interpreter**.
- Some hospitals and emergency services have interpreters on-site or available via video call.
- You could bring the contact details of your usual interpreter to speed up the request interpreter services.



Accessibility solutions



Bring communication tools with you

- A **mobile** phone with note-taking apps for **written messages**.
- **Speech-to-text** and text-to-speech apps for situations without an interpreter.
- Apps for **remote sign language interpretation**, if you use them.



Ask to confirm information



To **ensure** you **have all the information**, ask them to write down:

- The diagnosis.
- Medication instructions.
- Next steps in treatment.
- Future appointments.



Request for medical information

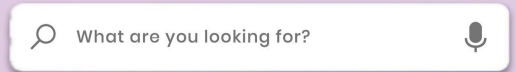
👉 Request communication for medical tests

To **ensure** you **have all the information**, ask them to write down:

- If you are going to have a medical test, CT scan, blood test, ultrasound, etc. ask staff to explain the procedure visually, in writing, or in sign language.
- This will help you understand what they are going to do and provide reassurance.

👉 Request support for follow-up

- If you need follow-up consultations, try to coordinate with the health service to **ensure sign language support** is available if needed.
- You can also ask if it's possible to handle **follow-ups via email or written messages**.



Useful Resources



- [Communication access in healthcare- A guide for Deaf Patients](#)
- [My Healthcare passport and My Healthcare Report](#)
- Here you can find templates that you can download and print and fill in with your health informations to show you doctor
- [Communication Cards Sheet](#)
Open or print this file to show your medical provider graphics about your symptoms, preferred method of communication and preferred healthcare treatment
- [Communication Boards for Adult in Healthcare Settings](#)
Here you will find all kinds of communication boards, with images, topics and letters to spell to use in a healthcare setting



TO FIND OUT MORE

