

# What to check for

**i** Contact your GP practice about any of these symptoms if they are ongoing, unexplained or unusual for you.

## Swallowing or chewing problems

Difficulty swallowing or a feeling of something in the throat. A sore or ulcer in the mouth that lasts longer than 3 weeks.

## Cough or hoarse voice

A cough or hoarse voice that does not get better.

## Breathlessness

Feeling out of breath for no reason.

## Breast, chest or nipple changes

Lumps or any changes to the look or feel of your breast, chest, nipple or armpit.

## Stomach and tummy problems

Indigestion or heartburn that happens most days or is very painful. Having a bloated or swollen tummy often or for a long time.

## Bowel changes

Any changes that persist including:

- needing to poo more or less often
- loose poo (diarrhoea)
- blood when you poo.

## Problems peeing

Problems peeing:

- needing to pee suddenly
- pain when you pee
- blood in your pee (urine).

## Pelvic problems

These may include:

- any changes to the vulva or vaginal area
- a swelling or lump on a testicle.

## Changes in weight

This includes losing weight or losing your appetite for no reason.

## Tiredness

Feeling very tired for no reason for a long time.

## Fevers or infections

Fevers or infections that last a long time and keep coming back. Heavy sweating, especially at night.

## Lumps or swellings

Lumps or swelling anywhere in your body that do not get better.

## Sores or ulcers

Sores or ulcers anywhere on your body that do not get better.

## Pain

Unexplained pain that does not get better.

## Bleeding or bruising

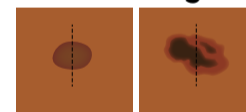
This includes:

- blood in your pee or poo
- blood in your spit or vomit
- bruises when you have not hurt yourself
- heavier periods than usual
- vaginal bleeding between periods, after sex or after the menopause
- blood in your semen.

## Skin changes

Including unexplained rashes, or a mole that:

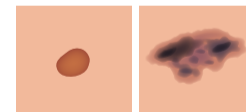
### Normal Irregular



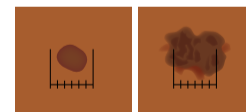
is uneven or irregular in shape



has uneven or bumpy edges



is more than 1 colour



is more than 6mm wide



changes in size, shape or colour, tingles, itches or bleeds, or is crusty.



It is important to get symptoms checked even if you find them embarrassing to talk about. Remember that healthcare professionals are there to help.

# Getting a symptom checked

Always get advice from your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or GP practice if you have symptoms that are ongoing, unexplained or unusual for you:

**Ongoing** – a symptom that lasts for more than a few weeks, or keeps coming back.

**Unexplained** – a symptom that has no obvious cause.

**Unusual** – a change in your body that is not normal for you.

## Tips for talking to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or GP practice.

- 1 Think about what you want to say.** You may want to write down some of these details:
  - What is the symptom or change?
  - When did it start?
  - Does it follow a pattern?
  - Does anything make it better or worse?
  - How does it affect your daily life?

- 2 Sometimes it is hard to book an appointment. You may need to call more than once.** But keep trying until you get one. You can also book longer appointments.

- 3 Take someone with you for support.** You could ask them to listen or take notes.

- 4 Talk and listen. Try to:**
  - explain the symptoms in your own words
  - answer any questions as honestly as you can
  - ask if you need more information or do not understand something
  - write notes, or type notes on your phone.

- 5 Make sure you know what will happen next.** This might include:
  - when you should make another appointment
  - where and when to expect an appointment with a specialist doctor or for a test
  - who to contact if you need information or more support.

- 6 Repeat back what you understand.** Your health professional can explain anything you are confused about.

- 7 Remember, symptoms are often nothing to worry about.** But if unexplained symptoms come back or do not get better, get advice again. Call your GP practice and ask for advice about anything you are not sure about.

Some people may worry they are wasting their GP's time by asking about symptoms. But if you have any of the signs or symptoms on this leaflet, it is important to get advice from your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or GP practice. They are there to help. If you are worried about getting a symptom checked, call us on 0808 808 00 00. Or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)



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