

Talking to your doctor

If you're worried about your smell loss or smell changes, seeing your doctor is the best place to start. Because it's relatively uncommon, some doctors aren't aware how much it can affect your life. However, they will want to work with you to help plan what to do next. This leaflet can help you think about what you want to say. It can also help you to think about what you'd like to achieve by the end of your consultation and any next steps.

We've left space for you to write some notes before, during and/or after your consultation.

This is how I'm feeling right now

How long has your sense of smell been affected? How does it make you feel? Maybe think of some words to describe how you're feeling overall at the moment. Here are a few ideas:

- Ok at the moment?
- Apprehensive?
- Worried?
- Frustrated?
- Isolated?

This is how it affects me

- Physically – how does it affect your body?
- Emotionally – how does it affect your feelings?
- Socially – how does it affect your relationships with family and friends?
You could try describing how smell loss affects you using a scale of '1-10'.

Your doctor may explain that the way smell loss affects you is known as 'biopsychosocial'. This means that how you're feeling physically, emotionally and socially is all connected.

My ideas/thoughts

What would you like to get out of this consultation?

- Do you want some help right away, or would you prefer to wait longer and see if it gets better by itself?
- Can you think of some ways your doctor might be able to help?
- Is there any medication that might work?
- Do you feel you've waited long enough already and now want a second opinion from a specialist?
- Can your doctor suggest someone who can do this?
- Have you read anything you'd like to share with your doctor?
- You could refer them to this website link – either while you are having your consultation, or for them to follow up.

My concerns – I'm worried about...

- Tell your doctor about your main worries. How is it affecting your life in general? What's changed?
- How has it affected your weight?
- Are you worried about its effect on others? Family? Friends? Relationships?
- Who are you most worried about?
- Does it affect your work, as well as home life?
- Does it affect your ability to socialise? How do you find going out or eating out?

My expectations – As a next step I'm hoping you can...

- Your doctor may ask what you're expecting or hoping to get from the consultation, so it's a good idea to think about this before your appointment.
- Are you hoping to be referred for a second opinion?
- Would this be to a neurologist? Or to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist?
- Before you leave your appointment, aim to agree the next steps with your doctor so you have a plan of action.
- Some people find keeping a diary, logging each visit and what was discussed and agreed, can help.