

How Do I Ask For Help?

Give this page to your healthcare provider. It will let them know that you understand the role of an interpreter and wish to have one at your next appointment.

“I understand the role of an Interpreter and I wish to have one at my next appointment to help me communicate effectively with my healthcare provider.”



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I ask for an Interpreter with the same background or gender as me?

You can make your wishes known when requesting an interpreter, but there is no guarantee your request can be fulfilled.

How can I be sure that my interpreter will not talk about what goes on in my appointment?

Professional interpreters are required to keep all information confidential. If they discuss anything from your appointment, they can be held responsible. You can ask your interpreter to destroy any notes they take during the appointment, in front of you.

If I feel embarrassed, do I have to talk about personal things in front of my interpreter?

It is important to be honest during your appointment so that your healthcare provider can understand your health condition. You can feel safe to speak openly when working with the interpreter.

Can a friend or family member interpret for me?

Even if a friend or family member can speak English, using a professional interpreter is the best way to ensure accurate communication. Your family and friends can be part of your support team.

Can I call my interpreter if I have a question about my health care?

No, you should not contact the interpreter. Interpreters are a communication aid, not a healthcare provider.

How much will it cost?

Many healthcare providers will provide an interpreter for free. If your healthcare provider requires you to pay, ask about the cost before your appointment, or for a referral to a healthcare provider who will not charge for providing an interpreter.

Working with your PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER



Do I Need an Interpreter?

If you or a family member feels more comfortable speaking in a language other than English you may need a professional interpreter. Interpreters can improve your communication with your healthcare provider by allowing both parties to speak easily in their own language.

The quality of healthcare you receive can be improved by having an interpreter at your appointment. For example, an interpreter will support the conversation you have with your healthcare provider when discussing:

- Medical tests
- Your symptoms and diagnosis
- Informed consent by patient
- Treatment options
- Medication instructions and medical directions
- Follow-up appointments
- Other healthcare needs



What Does an Interpreter Do?

Interpreters accurately deliver a spoken message from one language into another language. Interpreters help patients and healthcare providers speak easily and effectively to one another.

Who Is a Professional Interpreter?

Interpreters are trained and tested professionals who help to reduce barriers in communication and understanding. Professional interpreters must follow established standards of practice and a strict code of ethics.

A Professional Interpreter is Required to:

- Interpret everything that is said by everyone present
- Keep all information confidential
- Be neutral and not favour anyone in the conversation
- Show respect toward everyone present
- Provide interpretation without bringing in their own personal values, beliefs or ideas
- Maintain professional limits
- Avoid conflicts of interest by not interpreting for neighbours, family or friends

Professional interpreters cannot act on your behalf. They will not add or take away from what you have said in your appointment.

How Do I Get an Interpreter?

Accessing an interpreter for you or a family member is easy.

- 1 Ask your Healthcare Provider.**
Let them know as early as possible that you would like an interpreter for your upcoming appointment.
- 2 Find a Clinic that works with Newcomers.**
If your healthcare provider cannot arrange an interpreter, ask:
 - for a referral to a healthcare provider which does provide language services
 - at language schools
 - at settlement services
 - at social service offices
 - at welcome centres
 - at employment centres
 - school settlement workers
- 3 Ask in Your Community.**
If your healthcare provider cannot provide an interpreter, ask people in your community where professional interpreter services are available for free. Ask at community centres, at your place of worship, your neighbours or family friends.

Types of Interpretation

There are 2 common types of interpretation:

- 1 Face-to-Face Interpretation** where an interpreter is present at the appointment for you or your family member.



- 2 Over the Phone or Video Interpretation** where interpretation is done remotely by an interpreter.



Working with Your Interpreter

- **Express your preference.** When requesting an interpreter before your appointment, state your language or dialect and any other preference.
- **Arrive on time.** Interpreters are booked for the time of your appointment, and may have to leave if there is a delay.
- **Speak directly to your healthcare provider.** You should talk and respond to questions as if the healthcare provider understands your language. The interpreter will repeat in English exactly what you said.
- **Cancel in advance.** Tell your healthcare provider before your appointment if you need to cancel so the interpreter can be available for other patients.
- **Understand interpreter limits.** Interpreters cannot provide advice before, during or after your appointment. Do not contact the interpreter outside of your appointment.
- **Know your rights.** If you believe the message is not being clearly communicated, let the healthcare provider know and if needed, ask for a different interpreter.

You have a right to be heard.

Your healthcare provider will arrange for the type of interpretation based on factors such as type, complexity and length of appointment, as well as availability of suitable interpreters.