



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE
OF DERMATOLOGISTS

Your dermatology appointment

What will happen?

At your first appointment, your dermatologist will

- Look at the affected area of your skin, hair or nails
- Ask questions about your general health and your family history if relevant
- Ask questions about how your symptoms are affecting your quality of life. You might want to tell your dermatologist about how your symptoms are affecting your ability to sleep, work and your mental health and wellbeing.

Getting a diagnosis and a treatment plan

Skin, hair and nail conditions can be complex. It might take a few appointments for your dermatologist to make a full diagnosis and to find a treatment that helps.

Making your appointment

Phone the dermatologist's clinic. You can ask your GP or nurse to help you.

When you phone to make an appointment, you might want to ask about:

- What area of expertise the dermatologist has in particular conditions, treatments or groups of patients
- How much it will cost and when you will have to pay
- Payment methods and whether Medicare rebates apply, and if they can process the refund for you
- If you need to bring the referral letter to the appointment or send it to them beforehand.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can bring a family member, friend, or support person to an appointment if you want. However, there may be some exceptions to this due to COVID-19. Ask about this when you make your appointment.

Can I use an interpreter?

You can use interpreter services. Ask about this when you make your appointment.

Getting ready for your appointment

Before your appointment think about any questions you want to ask, write these down and take them with you.

- Choosing Wisely Australia® have some great questions to have handy during a consultation [choosingwisely.org.au/5questions](https://www.choosingwisely.org.au/5questions)
- Or you can use Healthdirect's question builder <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/questions-to-ask-your-doctor>.

You can also download our editable [Your dermatology appointment notes](#) resource to record your important questions, information and next steps.



During your appointment

This is your appointment and your health.

You always have a right to ask questions about your skin, your health, and your treatment options.

Asking questions will help you get the best possible care.



Write down any important information or advice your dermatologist tells you



Tell the dermatologist if you don't understand what they are saying. It's ok to ask them to explain something again.



Answer the dermatologist's questions. They need all the information to help them make a diagnosis. This way they will know how to help you and your treatment options.

At the end of your appointment



Make sure you understand the next steps. Ask if you are unsure or want more information.



Repeat back the actions for you and your dermatologist to help you both remember.



If you have just been diagnosed with a condition, ask where you can find information and support and visit our [Patient Support Groups directory](#).



Ask about prescriptions, blood tests or receipts for claiming a Medicare rebate. If there is a rebate you may need to ask for this.

What happens next?

Depending on your diagnosis, your dermatologist may or may not need to see you again.

For some conditions, follow up or regular appointments with your dermatologist may be needed to help narrow down a diagnosis, check your progress and adjust treatments.

Your dermatologist may provide a management plan back to your GP.

Seeing a dermatologist by telehealth

You may have the option of seeing your dermatologist by phone or video chat, known as telehealth.

Telehealth allows you to have an appointment with your dermatologist, from the comfort, convenience and safety of your home or your GP's office using a smartphone or computer.

If you are interested in this option, ask your dermatology clinic when you make your appointment to see if it is right for you and your condition.

For more information on dermatology appointments by telehealth, what to expect and prepare, read our guide:

[Your dermatology telehealth appointment: A five step guide](#)



Remember

- ✓ It can be useful to think about any questions you want to ask and write these down.
- ✓ Ask if there is anything you don't understand or if you need more information or support.
- ✓ You can bring someone with you to an appointment.

This factsheet is also available online at dermcoll.edu.au

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About us

Dermatologists are doctors who are the medical specialists in skin health.

The Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD):

- Trains and supports dermatologists
- Advocates for better skin health for our communities
- Sets the clinical standard in dermatology



This is a general guide only and does not replace individual medical advice. Please speak to your doctor for advice about your situation. The ACD is not liable for any consequences arising from relying on this information.