

Support Person Information

Independent Medical Examinations

Who is a support person?

A support person is someone the patient can nominate to attend a consultation to provide emotional support and reassurance. A support person could be a colleague, friend, family member, industrial representative or lawyer.

At certain times, a patient may need the emotional support of someone they know well and who can provide support during a medical consultation.

The support person must be aware of this important role and the conditions for being present during a medical consultation. This leaflet contains information our practice provides to all support persons attending a medical appointment.

What is the role of a support person?

The role of a support person is to provide emotional support and reassurance to the patient during a consultation.

They can:

- provide emotional support and reassurance;
- observe the assessment, assist with clarifying directions from the physician and take notes if required.

A support person MUST:

- respect and maintain confidentiality about the patient's personal information and discussion during and after the consultation;
- remain quiet and not speak unless asked a direct question by the doctor;
- NOT answer questions on behalf of the patient;
- NOT advocate for the patient;
- leave the room if requested by the patient or physician.

Record of support person

For the purposes of a medico-legal interview and report, the full name and relationship of the support person will be recorded in our patient questionnaire form and medical report.

Management of overly enthusiastic or obstructive support persons during consultation

It is important that all participants in a medical appointment or interview clearly understand the support person's role and the nature of the interaction that should occur between the parties. The support person will be acknowledged and will be reminded of their role and that they are not an advocate. It is important to remind everyone involved of the need for confidentiality.

If the support person is deemed to be overly enthusiastic or obstructive during a consultation, they will be reminded that:

- they are present for support only and are not an advocate, and that;
- if the support person continues to be obstructive (e.g. repeatedly interrupting or continually asking for breaks to confer with the patient), they will be asked to leave the consultation. If the patient does not wish to continue the consultation without the support person, the consultation will cease.

If you have any questions, please see our staff at reception **before** the consultation starts.

