

# Shared Decision Making in Primary Care (For Patients)

## 10 top tips

- 1** Shared Decision Making (SDM) is a joint process in which a healthcare professional works together with a person to reach a decision about care. It is a recommended way to reach the best decision for your care.
- 2** Being part of SDM does not mean that you must make the decision if you do not want to. You can ask your healthcare team to make a clear recommendation of what they believe will be best for you.
- 3** Be prepared to share with your healthcare team the things that are important to you (e.g. time with family, mobility, travel, work etc.) as this is an important part of the SDM process.
- 4** You may want other people to be part of the SDM process, for example friends or members of your family. Make sure your medical team know this so that they can involve these other people in the SDM discussions.
- 5** Ahead of appointments, think about questions such as "What are my options?", "What are the potential benefits and risks?" and "How can we make a decision together that is right for me?". Your healthcare team should give you an opportunity to ask these questions.
- 6** Patient Decision Aids (PDAs) are tools (usually online) that help lay out information in a way that is relevant to your situation. PDAs should show both the potential risks and potential benefits of a treatment. Ask if there is a PDA that is appropriate for the decision you are making.
- 7** SDM can be supported by information that you can look at after an appointment, such as online videos or leaflets. You should be given time to look at these before you and your team reach a decision.
- 8** Not all decisions can be shared. People also have the right to refuse any treatment offered. Healthcare professionals are not obliged to offer a treatment, which, in their opinion, will have no benefit. Healthcare professionals also cannot provide access to treatments which are not available (although they may discuss them).
- 9** Ideally, the details of the SDM discussions you have with your specialist should be shared with your GP by letter. Some patients may appreciate further discussions with their GP or Practice Nurse, who they may have built a relationship with. They will be happy to have a discussion with you, however, they will be reliant on having the information shared with them by the hospital.
- 10** Macmillan has produced more information about making treatment decisions. This information is available on the Macmillan website.

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