

Number one reason people say they might delay seeing GP is difficulty making an appointment

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More than a third (39 percent) of people in Britain say difficulty making an appointment might put them off going to the doctor about a symptom they think could be serious according to a new study from Cancer Research UK.

This was the reason the largest number of people gave for putting off going to the doctor and was mentioned more often than worry about what the doctor might find (32 percent) and wasting the doctor's time (24 percent).

Following on from [another international survey](#) published last month which found people in the UK were more likely to be embarrassed or worried about what the doctor might find than people in other countries, this British study suggests perceived difficulty in making an appointment is the biggest barrier confronting people considering visits to their surgery.

To gauge the public's knowledge of cancer, every two years Cancer Research UK asks people questions about the signs and symptoms of cancer and what might put them off going to the doctor.

Since 2010 initiatives including the Department of Health's Be Clear on Cancer and Cancer Research UK's Tesco Charity of the Year partnership have worked to raise awareness of the importance of early

[cancer detection](#) and reduce fear and fatalism.

Sara Hiom, Cancer Research UK director of [early diagnosis](#) said: "The fact people now appear to be less scared, embarrassed or worried about what the doctor might find and more knowledgeable about cancer symptoms suggests real progress in our fight to increase early diagnosis of cancer and prevent thousands of [avoidable deaths](#)."

"We hope projects like Be Clear on Cancer and [Cancer](#) Research UK's [Charity](#) of the Year partnership with Tesco, which have aimed to spread awareness about the vital importance of early [diagnosis](#), may be playing a crucial role in this."

"Although these results suggest a shift away from emotional barriers to visiting the GP, it's concerning to think that something as simple as making a doctor's appointment could be putting people off seeking help for a serious symptom."

"Further work is now needed to find out what lies at the heart of this issue for example whether people dislike not being able to see the same GP, appointment times do not suit or if the booking system is too complicated."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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