Speaking to Your GP:
Language and Tips for Effective Communication

Speaking to your GP about Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS) can feel daunting, especially when your symptoms are complex, fluctuate day to day, or are not yet well understood. Many people with MCAS report feeling dismissed or misunderstood, which can make it even harder to reach out for help.

This guide has been created to help you communicate more confidently and effectively with your GP. It offers practical language suggestions that can help you explain your symptoms, request support, and build a more collaborative relationship, whether you have a confirmed diagnosis or are still seeking answers.

The aim is not to script your conversations, but to give you helpful starting points and phrases you can adapt to your own situation. By using calm, clear, and respectful language, you can help your GP better understand what you're experiencing and how they might be able to support you.

We hope this resource helps you feel more prepared and empowered at your next appointment.

General Principles

- Make notes before your appointment to help you focus on your key points. You may find our Doctors Visit Preparation Form useful: mastcellaction.org/resources
- Be clear and concise – many appointments are short, so focus on the main points.
- Use neutral, factual language where possible – this helps to keep the focus on your symptoms and needs.
- Try to be collaborative – positioning the conversation as a partnership can lead to better outcomes.
- Acknowledge limitations and pressures GPs face – it shows empathy and can make the conversation feel more balanced.
- If you're struggling emotionally, that's valid – but having a few prepared phrases can help you stay on track when things feel overwhelming.

Helpful Language to Use

When Describing Your Symptoms

- "I've been experiencing a pattern of symptoms that I think may be connected."
- "My symptoms affect multiple parts of my body – skin, gut, respiratory, cardiovascular – and they appear to be triggered by everyday things like food, smells, temperature or stress."
- "I've been keeping a symptom tracker, and I've noticed some consistent patterns I'd like to show you." (Download our Symptoms Tracker Tools here: mastcellaction.org/resources)

When Asking for Support

- "Would you be willing to refer me to a specialist who has experience with complex allergic-type reactions?"
- "Are there ways we could start trying to get some relief from symptoms, even if a diagnosis is uncertain?"

When Talking About Treatments

- "I've read that H1 and H2 antihistamines, mast cell stabilisers or low-histamine diets can sometimes help – could we discuss if any of these are appropriate to try under your care?"
- "Would it be safe to trial some basic symptom management options while we investigate further?"

When Building Rapport

- "I really value your input – I know this isn't a straightforward issue, and I appreciate your time."
- "It's a huge relief just to be listened to – thank you."
- "Even if we don't find all the answers today, your support in this process makes a big difference."

Language to Avoid (if possible)

- Try not to refer to MCAS as "rare" or "controversial" without context – instead, say it's under-recognised or not yet well understood.
- Avoid listing long lists of self-diagnosed conditions without clear evidence – focus on your experience and impact on function.

If You're Not Being Heard

- "I hear what you're saying and respect your thoughts, but I'd still like to explore this further. This is having a major impact on my daily life, and I'd be grateful for any relief I can get."
- "Would you be open to reviewing this again if I bring more information or a symptom log to our next appointment?"
- "Can we focus on symptom management, even while the cause is being explored?"
- "I've found some helpful, evidence-based information from a UK charity, would you be open to reviewing this?"

Final Thoughts

We know how exhausting it can be to keep explaining your symptoms, especially when you're not feeling well and may already have had difficult experiences with healthcare professionals. You deserve to be listened to, believed, and supported – and although the path to understanding MCAS can be complex, you are not alone. This guide is here to help you feel more confident in those conversations. Take what's useful, adapt it to your style, and know that it's okay to advocate for yourself. Every step forward matters, even the small ones. If you need more information or support, Mast Cell Action is here to help.

To discuss MCAS-aware doctors on our MCAS Professional Referral List, please get in touch with us at info@mastcellaction.org