



Communication with Health Professionals

Good communication between health professionals, and the people they care for is important for a trusting relationship.

At times communicating with health professionals may feel difficult or intimidating. Cancer comes with a whole new vocabulary; cancer types, medication names, tests and results. Sometimes there is too much information. Other times too little. There might also be occasions when health professionals, patients and whānau have different priorities. For people with advanced breast cancer, careful discussions where the balance between quality of life and quantity of life are considered, will also be important.

It is common for people to feel overwhelmed during medical appointments. Often people describe forgetting to ask certain questions, not remembering some of the detail discussed or maybe not feeling able to share their real concerns or fears.

This article outlines some tips to ensure your needs are met when you communicate with your health professionals.



Plan beforehand.

Write down anything you'd like to discuss and questions you would like answered. Bring this along to the appointment and share with your health professional. This does not need to be a very long list. Some different areas you might like to discuss or ask about could include;

- Test results
- New symptoms
- Any problems with medication – e.g. forgetting to take them, side effects
- Any new treatments
- Current coping and emotions; mood, sleep
- Supports – any new supports needed, whānau supports
- Specific questions or concerns
- Quality vs quantity of life
- Follow-up plan

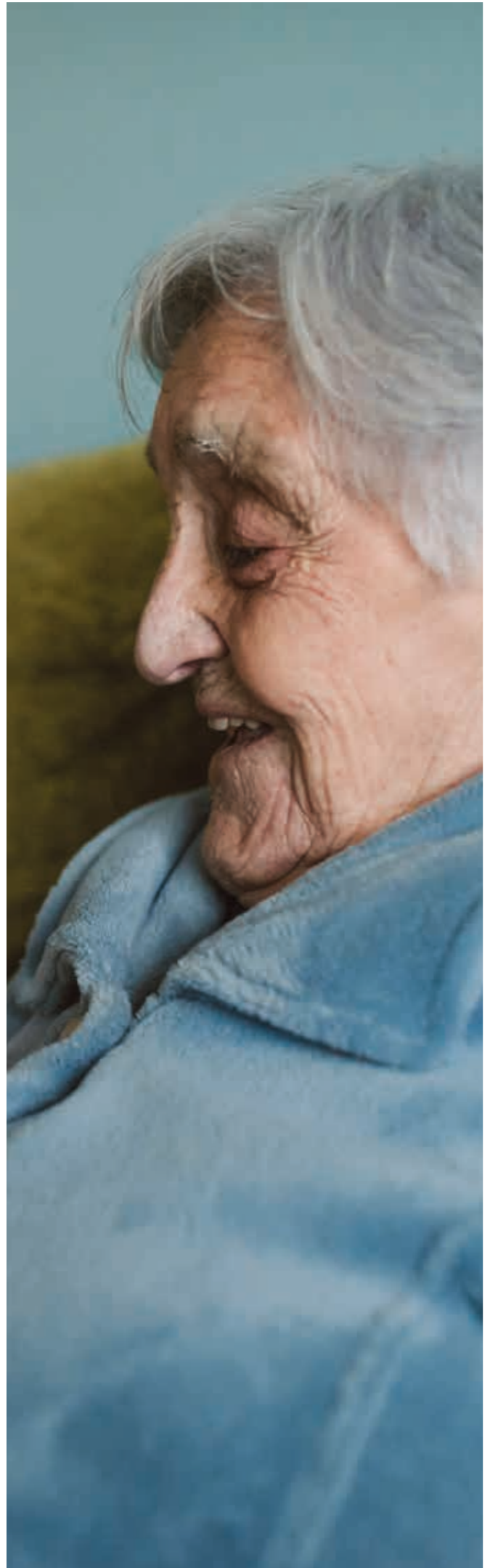
Explain what you need.

Some people like a lot of information at their appointments. Others find they cope better if only told essential information. It can be helpful to explain to the health professional what level of information to your health care you find helpful.

Bring Support.

Ask a whānau member, friend, or advocate to come to your appointment with you. As well as physically being there to support you, they can also ask questions and help listen to and write down the information provided.

If someone can't physically attend an appointment with you, ask if they could phone in or join via Telehealth e.g. Zoom.



Written information.

During the appointment, write down answers to your questions and important information you might need later. Or ask if this can be written down by your health professional or your support person. You can also request a copy of any notes or letters from the appointment.

Ask questions.

If you don't understand or aren't quite sure of something, ask for clarification.

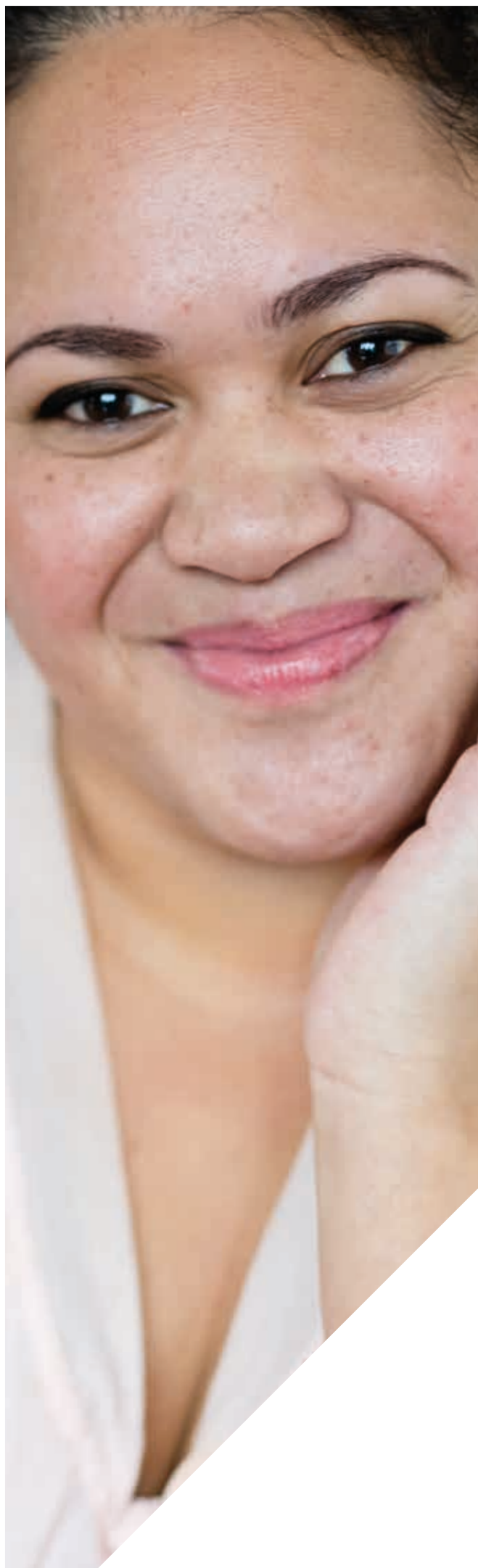
Record the appointment

You could ask for permission to audio record the appointment. That will allow you and any support person to listen to it later. This can be particularly helpful if new or complex information is discussed.

Follow-up support

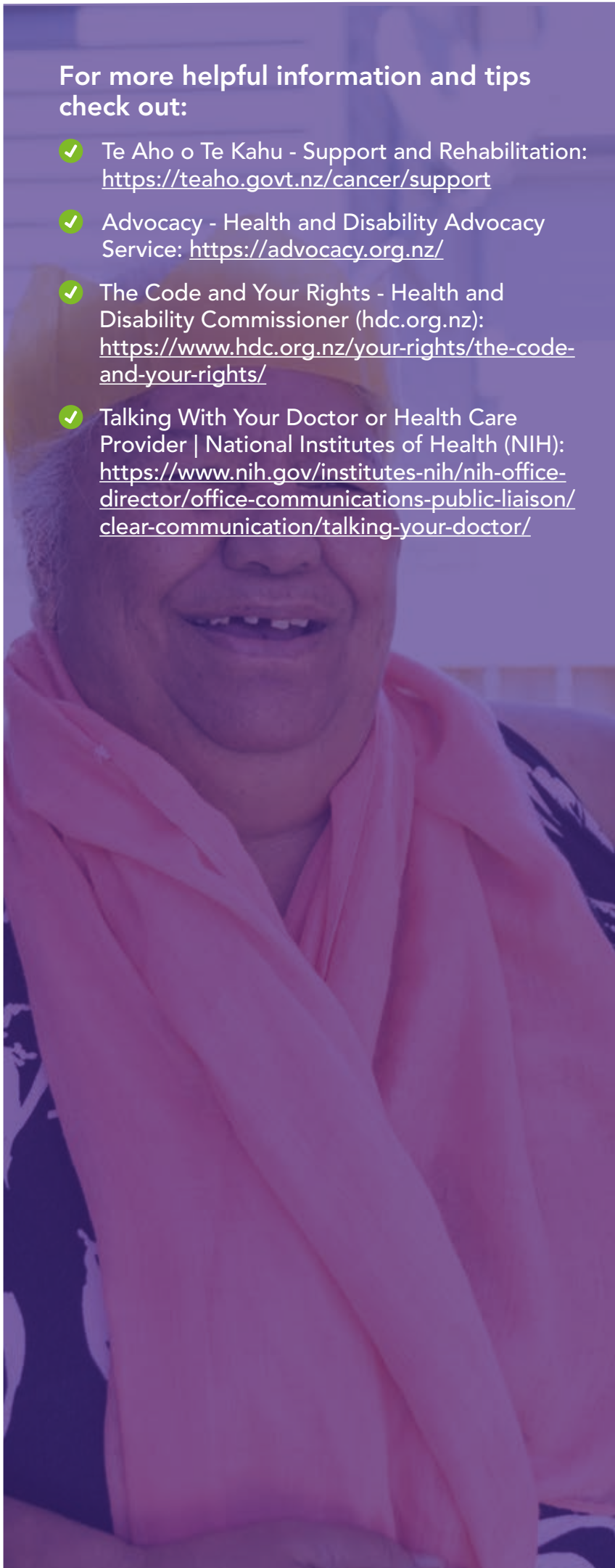
Find out who to contact if you have follow-up questions or need extra advice or support. This might be your specialist, a nurse, or another health professional. Ask what form of communication is best, e.g., email, phone or booking a follow-up appointment. Advocacy groups can also be useful contacts.

These strategies can help you communicate clearly with your health professionals to get the information and care that you need.



For more helpful information and tips check out:

- ✓ Te Aho o Te Kahu - Support and Rehabilitation: <https://teaho.govt.nz/cancer/support>
- ✓ Advocacy - Health and Disability Advocacy Service: <https://advocacy.org.nz/>
- ✓ The Code and Your Rights - Health and Disability Commissioner (hdc.org.nz): <https://www.hdc.org.nz/your-rights/the-code-and-your-rights/>
- ✓ Talking With Your Doctor or Health Care Provider | National Institutes of Health (NIH): <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/talking-your-doctor/>



IBRANCE® (palbociclib 75 mg, 100 mg and 125 mg) Capsules and Tablets.

IBRANCE (palbociclib) is a funded prescription medicine used to treat HR+, HER2- advanced breast cancer taken in combination with an aromatase inhibitor or fulvestrant. IBRANCE has risks and benefits. Do not take IBRANCE if you are allergic to palbociclib or any of the other ingredients in IBRANCE capsules or IBRANCE tablets. Caution is needed if you are premenopausal or perimenopausal, have or have had abnormal blood test results, respiratory infections or problems with your lungs, problems with your liver or kidneys, are lactose intolerant, are pregnant or planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding. Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines. Common side effects include infection, abnormal blood test results, tiredness, feeling sick or vomiting, diarrhoea, sore mouth, lips or tongue, hair loss, loss of appetite, nose bleed, skin rash, change in sense of taste, blurred vision, increased tearing or dry eyes, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than usual. If symptoms continue or you have side effects, see your doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional. Ask your doctor if IBRANCE is right for you. Use strictly as directed. Contains 75 mg, 100 mg or 125 mg of palbociclib. IBRANCE is funded. A pharmacy charge and normal doctor's fees apply for all prescriptions. Further information on IBRANCE is available from Medsafe www.medsafe.govt.nz or Pfizer New Zealand Limited, Auckland, www.pfizer.co.nz Ph. 0800 736 363. V10721