

# The Duties of a Doctor

registered with the General Medical Council

Patients must be able to trust doctors with their lives and well-being. To justify that trust, the profession has a duty to maintain a good standard of practice and care and to show respect for human life.

In particular doctors must

- make the care of patients their first concern
- treat every patient politely and considerately
- respect patients' dignity and privacy
- listen to patients and respect their views
- give patients information in a way they can understand
- respect the right of patients to be fully involved in decisions about their care
- keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date
- recognise the limits of their professional competence
- be honest and trustworthy
- respect and protect confidential information
- make sure that their personal beliefs do not prejudice their patients' care
- act quickly to protect patients from risk if they have good reason to believe that they or a colleague may not be fit to practise
- avoid abusing their position as a doctor; and
- work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patients' interests

In all these matters doctors must never discriminate unfairly against their patients or colleagues. And they must always be prepared to justify their actions to them.