

How to ask for what you need



HAE reality

For most people, advocating for yourself doesn't come naturally. For people with hereditary angioedema (HAE), it can bring feelings of guilt and a desire not to burden friends and family. But learning to be your best advocate may improve your overall well-being. Feeling empowered can help you take control, make informed decisions, and stand up for yourself effectively.

Taking control

Below are strategies from mental health experts that may be helpful as you consider asking for what you need.

➤ Be assertive

Assertiveness helps effectively convey thoughts and needs clearly and confidently so your voice can be heard and respected. Being confident when raising questions and concerns to others may help the conversation be more productive.

➤ Be self-aware

Self-advocacy involves understanding your strengths, challenges, personal needs, and preferences so you can communicate them to others. Considering these elements before having a conversation may make it easier to be confident and firm in expressing your opinions and desires.

➤ Be direct

Talking about your needs and limitations with someone is important, but starting the conversation isn't always easy. It can be tempting to dance around an uncomfortable topic, but being direct about your needs can help people understand exactly how to support you. Firmly and clearly expressing your needs without apologizing may help to normalize these types of conversations.

➤ Be clear

Use verbal and non-verbal communication skills to ensure that what you say is understood. Verbal communication skills include elements like being mindful of tone, taking care to speak at an appropriate volume, taking pauses, and not speaking too quickly. Nonverbal communication focuses on body language (eg, folding arms or inclining the head), facial expression, and eye contact.

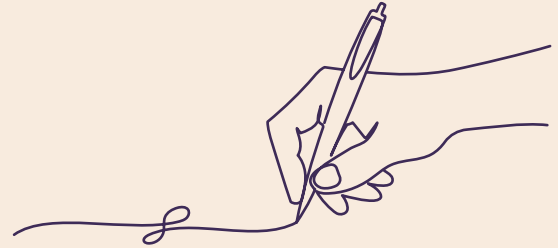


➤ **Be patient**

Take things one step at a time. If you have specific questions, encounter obstacles, or experience worries or fears, reach out to someone who can support you — whether it's a friend or family member, a healthcare professional, or someone from an advocacy organization.

Taking action

Planning ahead can be a helpful step when considering advocating for your needs. These questions can help you prepare for those situations.



What needs do I have? What specifically do I want to advocate for?

Who should be involved — either to ensure I get what I need or to support me in the process?

What might happen when I pursue this need?

How can I clearly ask for what I need without being aggressive?