

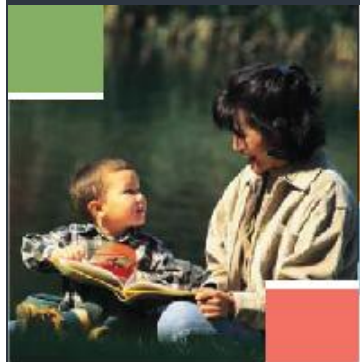


# TIPS FOR TAKING YOUR CHILD TO THE DOCTOR

A practical guide for parents of children with Autism

Autism is a disorder that affects your child's ability to communicate and has impacts on their behaviour. Taking your child into a new environment with different people and places can already be stressful; however this can be even worse if your child is ill. Many of you will often need to visit the doctor even if your child is not sick at the time.

With some planning ahead, there are steps you can take to try to make visits to hospital or a doctor's office run more smoothly. We hope this helps!



*PLAN AHEAD*

*BE PREPARED*

*YOU CAN HELP*



- **Book the first appointment of the day.**

The less time they spend waiting around, the less time they have to become agitated. Notify the staff when booking so that they will be understanding and can cater to any needs. This can also allow other staff to be scheduled such as additional therapists or nurses.

- **Visit the doctor's office beforehand.**

This will help you plan ahead and see if there is a quiet place to wait. Determine if the environment is appropriate for your child. You can see the doctor before you bring your child in with you. This will help you decide if this doctor is right for your child because it will be good for them to have a regular doctor they know. You can also discuss any issues with them beforehand so they are prepared and know your needs.

- **Bring your child's favourite objects.**

This might be their toys, blankets or cups. These objects can help to distract and calm your child. If it gets noisy, you can bring earplugs for them or their favourite music to listen to. If the communicate via pictures, bring their own pencils and paper if they prefer this.

- **Prepare your child.**

You can help by reminding them where they are going, what they will be doing and who they are seeing. You can do this verbally or show them in picture form. Take photos of where you are going and you can even ask if there are photos of the staff you can use so that your child is more familiar with the people.

- **Assist the care team as needed.**

You know your child better than anyone and can help them communicate or to keep your child calm. There is important information the doctor should know that you can ask yourself:

- How does you child communicate? Speech, pictures, sign language, gestures?
- What is the best way to approach your child?
- How much personal space do they need? If they need to be examined, how should this be done? Firm or light touch?
- How best can your child be comforted?
- What does your child find difficult and how can this be made easier?
- How has your child coped in previous medical visits? How do they respond to treatments and medications?



Autism Advisory  
& Support  
Service