

Make Each Doctor's Appointment Work for You...



1. Before your appointment, write down your questions and concerns. If it's a long list, ask for longer appointment.
2. Bring your list of health concerns to tell your doctor or nurse.
3. Begin making your own appointments:
 - watch your parent make an appointment;
 - practice with your parent what you will say;
 - have a calendar ready and know what appointment dates will work with your school schedule and other activities you are involved in;
 - talk to the receptionist to schedule your appointment.
4. Keep track of your appointments (on a calendar, on your phone, in a notebook, appointment card in your wallet).
5. Try asking the following three questions at each appointment:
 - What is my main problem?
 - What do I need to do?
 - Why is it important for me to do this?
6. Help your health providers out by knowing your own medical history and what your needs are.
7. If you see specialists, ask them to send their reports to your primary care physician and/or your other specialist.
8. Bring a list of the medicines that you take regularly.
9. Bring your insurance card.
10. Ask lots of questions. Make sure you understand what you need and why certain medication, therapy, or equipment is being used.
11. Have parent(s) remain in the waiting room while you spend time with your healthcare provider on your own.

(Next page provides tips for making your own appointments)

How to Make an Appointment:

- Be prepared. Fill in as much of the following as you can before you call. Get help and practice some before doing this by yourself.
- Have your calendar ready to be sure you make the appointment where it fits best with your school schedule or work schedule.
- When you call, be sure to ask to be put in touch with Dr. _____
(fill in your doctor's or nurse practitioner's name) appointment desk.
- Know your date of birth.
- Know the name of your insurance provider.
- Know the reason you need the appointment.
- If you need assistance to get onto the exam table or need an interpreter, be sure to mention it when you call.

Sample Script:

"Hello, my name is _____"
(Use your first and last name)

"I need an appointment to see _____"

"Because _____"
(Example: "I need a check up, I'm having headaches, I'm having ear pain.")

"How soon can I get in? _____"
(Write date and time here)

If the date and time is okay, just say, "Thank you, that will be fine."

If not, just say, "That won't work for me, can you look for something else?"

"How long is the appointment? _____"
If you think you will need more time, just say, "I think I will need more time."

If you will need extra help or equipment, just say so:

"I will need _____"
(Example: a lift to get onto the exam table)

Before you end the phone call, repeat the date and time of your appointment:

"Okay, I will be there on _____ at _____"
(Date) (Time)

Follow-up steps: _____

(Put the appointment on the calendar so you won't forget it. Prepare questions for your doctor. Bring a list of your medications)

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