



# Family Health Care Tips

## Handling Medical Appointments!

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*Parents Reaching Out provides resources that focus on helping families make informed decisions about the care and education of their children. Keeping your family healthy means knowing how to navigate the health care system and talk with your doctor or other providers. We hope these tip sheets will give you the information you may need to access the best, most cost-effective medical and related services to meet the needs of your family.*

*Taking your child to the doctor often times is no easy task. Sometimes you may feel like it would be easier to plan a trip to another country! Planning a trip and handling your medical appointments are alike in many ways. You have to think of all the things you may need to make your journey successful. The list below may help you as you plan your child's visits to the doctor.*



1. Find out your doctor's schedules at the Hospital and Clinic. It might be possible to schedule a few appointments in one day. This will save you money on gas, parking, childcare for siblings and reduce the number of trips to the doctor. Planning ahead will make it less stressful for you and your child.
2. Use one calendar for everything. It helps to avoid missing appointments. If you are writing appointments on different calendars you may miss something.
3. In each calendar box when you have an appointment, write down the doctor's name, address, phone number, fax number and ID number. Then, if you have to cancel or reschedule an appointment all the important information is on one page.
4. Keep a bag packed for your doctor visit at all times. This way, in an emergency, you have a medications, phone numbers, toys, snacks, and drinks ready. You will be able to get to the doctor's office without wasting any time.
5. If your child is fearful or dislikes visits to the doctor or procedures that may be used during the appointment, bring something that will help calm them down. This may be food, candy or a small toy that they enjoy.
6. Bring something for you to do while waiting – i.e. book, thank you cards.
7. When you arrange for childcare for your other children, make sure the caregiver is available to stay later in case your doctor's appointment takes longer than you anticipate.
8. If a hospital admission is a possibility, bring your child's current medications, pajamas, and favorite nighttime toy to make the transition easier. Even though the hospital will not be able to use the medications you bring, it will provide accurate information on the meds and doses.
9. Bring a small notebook to write down questions and notes about medication changes or instructions. Relying on your memory while you try to calm your child is virtually impossible.
10. Bring a list of all current medications, dosages and times given. Give the note to the doctor. It can save time and the doctor can attach the note to the file rather than write all the meds in the chart. This is also a good way to double check that medicines you are giving are just what the doctor ordered.
11. Write down all of your questions prior to the appointment. It is easy to forget the important questions in the "heat of the moment".
12. Leave ample time to find parking.

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