

Ten Tips for a Successful Appointment with Your Child's Doctor

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1. Ask questions about your child's health. Write a list of questions ahead of time. If there isn't time to answer all your questions, set up a follow-up appointment or phone call.
2. Ask other adults who care for your child, like a babysitter or grandparent, if they have any questions for the doctor.
3. Repeat instructions your doctor gives you, and get clarification as needed.
4. Be honest. For example, tell your doctor if you are giving your child herbal treatments or tea.
5. You are the expert on your child, so you need to tell the doctor what you think, your instincts are important.
6. Siblings: when possible, leave siblings at home so you can give your full attention to the child who is being seen. If this is not possible, bring toys, books, or other distractions for the siblings.
7. Tell your child what to expect at the doctor's office. For slow-to-adapt children, help them feel more comfortable by playing games ahead of time about going to the doctor. There are also good books to read about going to the doctor.
8. When in doubt about your child's health, call! If you feel your child needs to be seen right away and you're told there are no appointments, ask to speak directly to the doctor. If needed, go to the emergency room or call 911.
9. Ask behavior questions. If your doctor doesn't know the answer, he or she can help you find a person who does.
10. If you are not satisfied with your doctor, it's your choice to switch. A doctor may be right for one family, but not another. If you are satisfied, tell your doctor what you appreciate about the care you are getting.