

TIPS ON HANDLING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

1. Find out the doctor's hours. Try to make the first appointment of the day or the first appointment after lunch.
2. Call before your appointment to see if the doctor is there and running on time.
3. Leave ample time for parking.
4. Bring extra money for parking, co-pays and lunch.
5. 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, thus making it less stressful on you and your child.
6. On a small piece of paper (the size of a credit card/business card) write or type the names, phone and fax numbers that you find yourself needing at various appointments, including pertinent doctors, labs, pharmacists, SSI numbers, ID numbers, etc.
7. Use one calendar for everything. It helps to avoid missing appointments. If you are writing appointments on different calendars you may miss something.
8. 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.

9. Keep a bag packed for your doctor visit at *all times*. This way in an emergency you have a toy, phone numbers, snack, drink, and medications ready and can run to the doctor's office without having to waste time looking for stuff.
10. If you think your child will need something that he or she hates or is afraid of, bring some type of reward (whether food, candy, small toy - whatever will work to calm them down).
11. Bring something for you to do while waiting - i.e. book, thank you cards.
12. Make sure the individual you have watching your other children is available to stay later in the event it takes longer than you anticipate.
13. If a hospital admission is a possibility bring your child's current medications, pajamas, favorite nighttime toy, etc. 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.
14. Bring a small notebook to write down questions and notes about medication changes or instructions. Relying on your memory while trying to calm a child is virtually impossible.
15. Bring a note 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 what you are giving is what the doctor ordered.
16. Write down all of the questions you have prior to the appointment. It is easy to forget important questions when in the "heat of the moment".