




Health Information and Education Center Effective Medical Appointments

 Medical appointments for children with special health care needs can often be a challenge. We have included several tips to assist you in making the medical appointment the most effective for you and your child.

Tips you can use before and during the visit.

1. Find out the doctor's hours, Try to make the first appointment of the day or the first appointment after lunch.
2. Use one calendar for everything. It helps to avoid missing appointments. In each calendar box when you have an appointment, write down the physician name, address and number. Then if you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment all the important information is on one page.
3. Know the purpose of the visit and what may occur, length of time for the appointment, so that you and your child can be prepared.
4. Think about your child's progress and note any changes that have occurred, making a list of questions that need to be addressed.
5. Bring a notepad to take notes for things that you want to remember such as medication changes, treatments etc. Also to help you remember items you wanted to discuss with your physician. Additionally keep a note of all medications, dose, and times given. Give it to your physician, which will save time and another way to double check that what you are giving is what the doctor ordered.
6. Keep a list on a small business card of names, numbers that you find yourself needing at appointments, including physicians, SSI numbers, ID numbers etc.
7. Leave ample time for parking. Bring extra money for parking if it is needed, for co-pays and for lunch.
8. If possible find out your physician's schedules at the Hospital and Clinic.

It might be helpful to schedule a few appointments in one day. This will save you money on gas, parking, child care for siblings and reduce the number of trips to the doctor, in addition making it less stressful on you and your child.

9. Prepare your child for the visit. 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 you can go on a moments notice if you need to.
10. If you think your child will need something for when he or she is afraid, bring some type of reward (toy, food, candy-whatever will work to calm them down).
11. Call before your appointment to see if the doctor is there and running on time.
12. Bring something for you to do while waiting, or use the time to talk and meet new parents in the waiting room. You may learn of support networks or other organizations which can assist you and your child.
13. Make sure if you have other children, the individual watching them is available to stay later in the event it takes longer than anticipated.
14. Ask questions, and expect that your physician will also ask questions. Identify interesting events that have occurred. Offer feedback about recommendations to you about your child's health. If you are satisfied with a job well done, tell them of your satisfaction. They too are encouraged to hear feedback.
15. Identify with the physician if he/she can be contacted with questions that you may have, or concerns that happen following the visit. Where to call, appropriate times etc.
16. If a hospital admission is a possibility bring your child's current medications, pajamas, favorite nighttime toy etc. to make the transition easier. The hospital will not be able to use the medications but having them or a list will provide accurate information on the meds and doses.
17. Consider starting a record keeping system. FVND has a Care Notebook available for families, to assist you in keeping track of all necessary information for your child. Call the FVND office for more information.

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To contact FVND call 888-522-9654, www.geocities.com/ndfv/ or write PO Box 163 Edgeley, ND 58433

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