

# Preparing your child with autism for a medical visit



## Scheduling a visit:

- When you schedule an appointment, ask for an appointment time during the quietest time of day (first morning or first afternoon).
- Let the scheduler know of any concerns you have about your child's ability to cope during the upcoming visit.
- Call the clinic 1-2 days before the visit and speak with the nurse or office manager to let them know of any concerns you have about your child's ability to cope or remain calm during the visit. Ask them what to expect during the visit so you have an idea of how to prepare your child.

## Preparing your child:

- Look online for pictures, videos or social stories about the type of medical visit and show to your child.
  - (video example: <http://childrensnational.org/news-and-events/video-gallery/what-to-expect-from-an-outpatient-visit> )
- Work with your child's school or therapists to create a visual schedule for the planned medical visit.
- Practice at home and at school what may occur at a routine medical visit. Procedures such as blood pressure, temperature, physical exam, and checking eyes, ears, throat are commonly done.
- Call your child's primary care doctor (pediatrician) to ask for a relaxing medication, if necessary, before the medical visit.

## Things to bring to the visit:

- Bring the other parent/guardian, a close family friend or your child's therapist to help support and distract your child during the medical visit.
- Bring your child's communication system or technical device.
- Have a bag ready with favorite comfort items, distraction items, tablet or internet device, or favorite rewards for positive behaviors.
- While some medical offices do not allow food, you may want to bring snacks to have ready if this will help your child get through the visit.