

Health Care Visit Check List for all Children Including Children with Special Health Care Needs

Your child's health care provider expects to work with you as a partner to keep your child safe and healthy. You'll want to work together to develop trust and easy communication. This takes time and doesn't usually happen in just one visit. Share information—each of you has knowledge the other needs to provide the best care for your child.



Choosing a Health Care Provider

- If you have a choice, look for a provider whose style and office procedures fit your needs. Talk with family and friends about providers they recommend.
- Do you think his/her style fits your needs and those of your child?
- Can you talk easily with this provider? Is your language and culture understood and respected?
- Will this provider offer a “Medical Home?” *
- Is the office location convenient?
- Are there hours or times you can call with questions?
- Who is available when the provider is away?
- Will your health insurance cover this provider?
- If you don't have health care coverage:

Call toll-free 1-877-KIDS-NOW for information on free or low cost children's health insurance, or go to www.insurekidsnow.gov

Check with your health department, local hospital, or state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

* A Medical Home is not a building, house, or hospital, but is an approach to providing high-quality healthcare in a cost-effective way that is accessible, family-centered, continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally effective.

See www.medicalhomeinfo.org.

Preparing for a Health Visit

- Think through the purpose of the visit (e.g. regular health check-up, immunizations, illness, etc.) and bring along any records you'll need. Use the Bright Futures Family Pocket Guide or the Bright Futures Encounter Forms for Families to help you prepare. **
- Think about your child's progress and what has changed since the last visit
- Make a list of questions or concerns you want to discuss.
- Put worries into words. A good health care provider will try to help you think through issues and find answers or referrals.
- Bring a notepad to jot down things you want to remember.
- Are there concerns or updates from others who see your child—child care center, school, sports, therapy program, hospital?
- Prepare your child for the visit. Encourage your child to ask questions and discuss concerns.
- Bring a toy, art project, favorite book, or homework to pass the time or show the provider.

During the Visit

- Talk about what matters to you. Your way of seeing your child helps the health care provider understand more about your child's development and your priorities.
- Expect your child's provider to ask questions such as:
 - “How does your baby respond to new people?”
 - ”How many hours does Juan sleep at night?”
 - “How is school going for Tina?”
 - “How does Philip handle stress?”
 - “How are things going with Julia's therapy program?”
 - “Kim, are you driving yet?”
- Ask questions about things important to your child—getting along with others, playing sports, after school jobs, etc.
- Mention significant or interesting events that have occurred recently to share the unique nature of your child and family:
 - Changes related to your child's health since the last visit, for example: an emergency room visit; changes in sleep, eating or behavior patterns; alteration in seizure activity.
 - Family events that have happened since the last visit—a move, a new baby, death, divorce.
- Offer feedback about recommendations made to you about your child's health.
 - Your opinions should be respected.
 - Sharing information will strengthen the partnership, even if you don't always agree.
- Ask what's likely to happen next in your child's growth and progress and what you can do to support healthy development.
- Share ideas, observations, and good resources with your health care provider. In turn, ask for recommendations for handouts, books, videos, or Internet resources you can check out?
- Give your health care providers constructive feedback on how they're doing caring for your child and providing information and support to you.
- Offer examples of suggestions that have been helpful.



After the visit is over, ask yourself

- Did you feel welcome and comfortable at the visit?
- Were there opportunities for you and your child to discuss concerns?
- Did your health care provider listen and communicate well?
- Did you understand everything discussed?
- If there was something you didn't understand, did you ask for and get a clearer explanation?
- If something unexpected or painful occurred were you able to provide support for your child?
- If you didn't get to cover everything you had planned to discuss:
 - Is there an easy way to get answers to questions between visits (e.g. calling the office or a health line)?
 - Are you comfortable waiting for the next visit? Are there other members of this provider team who can talk with you?
- If you didn't agree with your health care provider about an issue, did you discuss your concerns? Do you feel comfortable with the result?
- Were your values and views respected?
- If you were given referrals or instructions for care after the visit:
 - Do you know or have in writing what you should do next, and why?
 - Do you have names and phone numbers for any referrals mentioned?
 - If you are responsible for follow-up activities or treatments at home, do you feel prepared?
 - Is there someone you can check with about questions or observations?
- Do you need to share information from the visit with family members or other care givers?
- Are you clear about what needs to be done?
- Were you offered positive feedback about your child's care and wellbeing?
- Did you feel you were a partner with your child's providers?
- Is there anything you plan to do differently at your next health visit?



Emergencies - Be prepared! What is your health care provider's advice on how and when to get emergency help? Should you take the time to call the office first or call 911? Learn this before there is a problem. Keep emergency phone numbers in a place that is easy for anyone to find if there is a sudden problem.

**To see, order, or download Family Voices Bright Futures materials go to: www.fv-impact.org
For other Bright Futures materials go to: <http://brightfutures.aap.org> and www.brightfutures.org

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