



Preparing Child for Appointment – Tips for Parents

Due to COVID-19, appointments with a member of the Multidisciplinary Team will look different than usual. Knowing what to expect can help your child feel less out of control and more prepared for the unfamiliar sights. Here are some ideas on how to help prepare your child before their appointment.

Talk about Face Masks

- Practice at home using some playful activities so that they are comfortable seeing masks. Put a mask on your child's favourite stuffed teddy, baby or doll during playtime. You could act out a visit to the doctor using the teddy with the mask. This will help your child start feeling comfortable with a mask present.
- Parents can practice at home by wearing a face covering or face mask around the house to normalise the look.
- You could consider using video calling with family and friends while wearing face masks. This is all to help normalise the look.
- When out in public, and in places such as shops and park, bring your child so that they get used to other people wearing masks and not only family.
- Print out pictures or find pictures online of your child's favourite characters wearing masks. If there aren't any, print out a regular picture and draw a mask.
- You can ask your child if they would like to wear a face mask or face covering at home. You could take photos or selfies so that your child can see how they look. You can encourage your child to decorate a surgical mask so it is more personalised and fun.

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A few days before the Appointment

- Chat with your child about who they will be going to see in a few days.
- Depending on your child's age, you could read the story on our website titled '*Story about Appointment*' to help prepare your child for what to expect. You can contact your child's Therapist to get a bit more information on what kind of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be worn so that you can adapt the story to your child. You may be able to take out that an apron or gloves will be worn, if not necessary.
- Depending on the type of PPE that is deemed necessary for your child's appointment, you can remind your child that the person may be wearing a face mask, apron and gloves. You can explain to the child that the person is wearing this to stop spreading germs and to keep people healthy. Steer clear of using scary language or frightening images of what might happen if masks and other personal protective equipment are not worn.

Morning of Appointment

- Remind your child again about where they are going and who they will be going to see.
- Depending on the type of PPE that is deemed necessary for your child's appointment, you can remind your child again that the person may be wearing a face mask, apron and gloves. You can explain to the child that the person is wearing this to stop spreading germs and to keep people healthy. Again steer clear of using scary language or frightening images of what might happen if masks and other personal protective equipment are not worn.
- If needed, let your child bring something with them on the way to the appointment that they can have while waiting in the car. A familiar toy, blanket, or photos from home can help make your child feel more at ease.
- Have a think about your child's favourite cartoon characters, what makes them happy, how you soothe your child at home and what coping techniques work at home. This is important if your child is upset as it will help the member of the Multidisciplinary Team to help your child feel at ease.