



Preparing for Medical Appointments



Scan Me for a Social Story!

Medical appointments can be challenging due to unexpected sounds, strong smells, bright lighting, and unfamiliar routines. These strategies may help your child feel more comfortable and confident.

Before Appointment

- Prepare the body
 - Use proprioceptive (“heavy work”) activities 15-20 minutes prior
 - Animal walks
 - Carrying heavy bags/ backpack
 - Climbing playground equipment
- Prepare for what to expect
 - Visual schedule or social story (ask your therapist for a copy of our social story!) **Minute 5:55**
 - First-Then language **Minute 5:05**
 - Offer choices when possible

During Appointment

- Support the auditory + visual systems **Minute 4:50**
 - Offer sunglasses
 - Weighted blanket/ stuffed animal
 - Use noise cancelling headphones
 - Identify quiet space for breaks
 - Give body/ hand squeezes

After Appointment

- Support regulation + recovery
 - Allow quiet time/ calming activities
 - Use comforting supports (i.e. favorite toy, deep pressure if preferred) **Minute 7:00**
 - Celebrate effort and participation

Understanding Sensory Thresholds

Everyone processes sensory information differently.



Low Threshold (Small Cup): Notices sensory input quickly and may become overwhelmed.

Regulated (Medium Cup): Notices and handles input in a balanced and regulated way.

High Threshold (Large Cup): Needs more sensory input before noticing or responding.

Examples:

- Overresponsive children may cover their ears, become distressed at certain smells like hand sanitizer, pull away from stethoscope or blood pressure cuff, or be overwhelmed by a crowded or bright waiting room.
- Underresponsive children may be slow to respond to verbal directions, not seem bothered by loud sounds, being touched, or bright lights, or may not register pain that needs to be reported.

Neither response is good or bad—just different ways the nervous system processes sensory information.