



Clinic Visit – Helping Your Child to Cope

A visit to the clinic may feel stressful...

- When parents are honest about coming to clinic, kids feel less stress and anxiety.
- There are two ways kids usually cope with medical experiences:

1.



- Ask questions
- Usually choose to watch what is going on (and that's okay!)
- May want to look at, touch, and learn about medical supplies
- These kids are **information seekers**

2.



- Prefer to just “get it over with”
- Usually choose to look away or have their view blocked
- May want to play, chat, or be distracted from medical things
- These kids are **distractors**

Ways to Help an Information Seeker

- Tell your child when they are going to the clinic and why they have an appointment.
- Share what they might see, feel, hear, taste, and smell during their visit.
 - For example – bright lights, cool air, an elevator ride that tickles their tummy, a patient ID bracelet on their wrist, people talking, machines beeping, etc.
- If your child will have a procedure at the clinic and you know the steps, practice them with your child before you come. (Look at the PCH website for preparation stories with more information.)
- Have your child think about or write down questions they might want to ask staff during their appointment.
- Tell staff that your child is an information seeker. Ask staff to describe what they need to do and give your child a chance to ask questions. Have staff give your child a job.
 - For example – hold still, take a deep breath, count, etc.



Ways to Help a Distractor

- Be honest with your child about their clinic visit. Answer the questions your child asks.
- Let your child choose how much information they want staff to tell them. Make sure to tell staff what they decided.
 - For example – “He doesn’t want you to count before his poke.” or “She wants you to talk to me outside the room.” or “They don’t want to see what you’re doing.”
- Have your child get ready for their clinic visit by packing their favorite toys, activities, or tablet/phone so they have something to distract them.
- If needed, block your child’s view during procedures to help them focus on something else.



Coping Ideas

Try out these ideas for all kids (information seekers and distractors) to help them cope during a clinic visit:

- **Deep Breathing** – Slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take big breaths and small breaths by pretending to be different animals.
- **Blowing** - Blow bubbles or a pinwheel.
- **Squeezing** - Squeeze a stuffed animal, stress ball, or someone's hand.
- **Pressure** - Give a hug or gently press on your child's arm, leg, etc.

- **Distraction** - Play a game on a phone/tablet or play iSpy with things you see around the room.
- **Music** - Play calming music, favorite music, or sing a favorite song together.
- **Counting** – Count forwards or backwards. Try counting by 2s, 5s, or 10s for an extra challenge.
- **Positive Touch** - Provide comforting and calming touch.

Practice these coping ideas at home before visiting the clinic. This will help your child be able to use them when they are here!



During Your Visit

- Let staff know if your child is an information seeker or a distractor.
- Use coping ideas that you practiced at home.
- Tell your child you are proud of them when they do things that they felt worried or scared to do. Make sure to tell them they are brave!
- Your child can tell if you are worried or stressed. Try to help them be calm by showing you are calm, too.



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