



## Medical Appointments with Your Child: Be Informed and Assertive

Some parents feel anxiety about talking to a doctor about their child's weight, but remember that pediatricians and other health care providers can be a very useful resource. Think of your relationship with the doctor as a partnership where working as a team will allow you productive steps to improve your child's health care. A little preparation before the appointment will go a long way to make sure that you leave the doctor's office as a well-informed decision maker.

### Before the Appointment:

- 1 **Keep a daily log** of your child's symptoms or behaviors that concern you

Today's Date	Symptom(s)	Started on	Frequency	Affects eating, sleep, or other activities?

- 2 **Make a list of your questions** and begin with your most important concerns.

My Questions	
Most Important (ask first)	1. 2.
Important	1. 2.
Least Important	1. 2.

- 3 **Make a list of your child's medications**, including vitamins & over the counter.

Medication Name/Brand	Dose	Frequency

- 4 **Complete the "Talking to Your Child's Doctor about Weight"** questionnaire. It is important to consider your child's opinions and preferences in discussing weight.



**During the appointment:**

- 1 Take good notes** so that you can review the information later:
  - Bring a pen and notebook
  - Ask a friend or family member to write down what the doctor says
  - Use a voice recorder throughout the appointment
- 2 Stay organized and focused** by keeping your list of questions at your side.
- 3 Update the doctor** since the last medical visit such as new symptoms or worries that you have about your child's health.
- 4 Be sure that you understand the doctor**, including any diagnoses or recommendations.
  - Ask questions until you completely understand
  - Ask for specific written instructions
- 5 Speak up** if you are uncomfortable with the doctor's suggestions.
  - Ask if there are other choices and options.
  - Ask for a second opinion from another provider.
- 6 Be honest, clear, and direct** when asking questions.

**Examples of General Questions**

- *Is this a common or normal problem for my child's condition?*
- *Is the problem treatable? How long is the treatment and what is required?*
- *I don't understand what you just said. Could you please explain it again?*
- *I don't feel comfortable with that recommendation for my child. Are other options available?*
- *Do you have any printed material about my child's condition?*
- *Could you refer me to other professionals who could help me?*

**Examples of Body Weight-related Questions**

- *Does my child's weight affect his/her condition? If so, how? Can weight loss make a difference?*
- *How much weight loss is necessary to see a difference in his/her health condition?*
- *How much physical activity does he/she need? Can you recommend any activities?*
- *How often should I check my child's weight?*
- *How much weight can he/she realistically expect to lose?*
- *What should we do if my child gets off track or has difficulties meeting his/her goal?*
- *Where can I find more information about making healthy changes like this?*
- *What lifestyle changes would you recommend? Can you give specific suggestions?*





**After the appointment:**

**1 Have a plan** before you leave the appointment.

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Actions to Take</i>	<i>Date to Accomplish By:</i>
	1. 2.	
	1. 2.	
	1. 2.	

**2 Look for additional information** if you feel it would be helpful to further educate yourself.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Book Title or Website Address</i>

**3 Monitor improvements** and call the doctor if you notice complications or no changes.

**4 Schedule a new appointment with another doctor** if you are seeking a second opinion.

