

# Going to Hospital

*In My Shoes*  
Painters for Parents

1. Take your child on lots of pre-visits to the hospital. Let them get used to the place (sights, sounds, smells). Try to make the visits fun by finding something that interests your child eg ambulance, signs, numbers, arrows, café, a toy from the pharmacy.
2. Go for a pre-visit by yourself, and find the place your child will be going to (eg dental, child health), so that you know where to go, and what toys and space are available, eg is there a quiet area for recovery? Is there a DVD player, and can you bring a DVD with you? Where's the nearest toilet?
3. Ask staff for photos/picture of procedures, of staff.
4. Take photos of your child at the hospital. Make a photo book for your child.
5. If your child understands visuals, then show them a reward visual (make it a big reward) eg first hospital, then McDonald's.
6. Show your child on a visual calendar at home. "What are we doing on Friday?" "Where are we going?"
7. Role play at home eg stethoscope on chest, torch in ear, open mouth for toothbrush. Do this lots of times.
8. Picture books e.g. Usborne First Experiences 'Going To The Hospital', "Going to the Doctor". 'Going to the Dentist'. Read these and talk about the pictures.
9. Bring favourite food as reward (but only if your child is not 'nil by mouth').
10. Bring favourite object as reward/comforter.
11. Bring doll to use as a model to show your child what you want them to do.
12. Phone the clinic and ask for your child to be first/early on list. Tell the clinic your child is autistic and is difficult to manage in a waiting room.
13. Tell staff key words your child understands. "Do this", "Hands down," "open mouth", "sit down".
14. Tell staff child's likes/dislikes eg stickers, sweets, noises, lighting
15. Ask for your child's file to be tagged 'autistic' so that next time you don't have to explain about your child again.
16. Ask if your child can have early release from hospital, (if your child is supposed to stay overnight), and be nursed at home using district nurses.
17. Walk up and down the corridor while waiting, if your child is restless in the waiting room (tell the receptionist so that they can find you when it's your turn).
18. Before leaving home phone to check that the clinic is running to time, so that you don't have to wait for long at the hospital.
19. Phone the anaesthetist beforehand about anaesthetic options eg
  - a) can the child be given an oral anaesthetic in their favourite drink?
  - b) can they have a slow wake up anaesthetic, so they don't wake up fighting?
  - c) can they have cannula removed from their hand before they wake up?
  - d) can a parent be in the room while the child wakes up?
  - e) can the child be given anti vomiting meds?
20. Bring a support person (they can park the car, take photos, carry your bag etc)

