



Say Ah!'s Top 10 Back to School Tips

Say Ah!'s Back to School Tips™ can help make back-to-school check-ups better, simpler, and safer. Please feel free to share these tips with friends, family members and colleagues!

- 1. Get your forms in order!** Have all the school, daycare, and athletic health forms you need for each child. Make a list of which doctors to see and what paperwork you will need to have signed.
- 2. Call ahead to schedule the appointments.** If weekdays are a problem for you, find out if the doctor has weekend office hours.
- 3. Make a list of important information and bring it with you.**
This includes:
 - What medicines your child is taking. Include prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbs, and supplements (such as protein drinks).
 - Important facts about your child's health. Include allergies, chronic illnesses, any past surgeries, broken bones, etc.
 - Questions or concerns that you - or your child - may have about his or her health.

Make **three** copies of this list: One for you, one for your doctor, and one to give the front desk for your child's file.

4. Prepare your child for the visit. Depending on your child's age and readiness, let him or her know what to expect from the visit and what is expected of them. If they are old enough to speak to the doctor on their own, encourage them to do so.

5. Make sure your child is comfortable during the visit. This should be a positive experience in every way for your child. Talk with your child about anything that is bothering him or her (physically or emotionally), and help resolve the problem or concern.

6. Check that your child's records are correct and up to date.

The lists you just made should square with what is in your the doctor's file for your child. This is especially important if your child sees more than one doctor or has been to a hospital or an emergency department.

7. Communicate with your child's doctor! Speak up when you have something to say -- you are your child's advocate! **Ask questions** whenever you don't understand something, whether it is a medical term or medication directions.

8. Take notes so you don't forget what your doctor tells you.

9. Make sure you (and your child if s/he is old enough) understand important information such as medication directions, how to use an inhaler or other medical devices, or what to do if your child is referred to another doctor.

- Ask your doctor to repeat instructions if you don't get them the first time.
- Check your understanding by saying, "Okay. Let me make sure I've got this right," and repeat back to your doctor what s/he just said *in your own words*.
- If you go home and realize you have a question, contact your doctor immediately and ask for clarification.

10. Get your child's weight and height. This is great information to have as many medications are often given by weight. NOTE: These numbers can change throughout the year, so use them only as guidelines.

Bonus Tip: Finally, don't forget to get those school, daycare, and athletic forms signed!

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