

How to Talk to Your Child's Doctor

HANDBOOK



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Get a gold
S.T.A.R. for
your child's
health!

Schedule. **T**ake. **A**sk. **R**epeat.

UAMS

Center for Health Literacy

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How to Talk to Your Child's Doctor

HANDBOOK

How do you get a gold **S.T.A.R.** for your child's health?

Schedule the right kind of doctor's visit.

Take all important items and info with you.

Ask all of your questions.

Repeat back to your doctor what you understand about your visit.

How to use this handbook:

- ✓ Use the acronym **S.T.A.R.** to help you remember each step in this book.
- ✓ Check the boxes and take notes.
- ✓ Take this booklet with you to your child's next appointment.
- ✓ Keep this booklet as a guide for future doctors' visits.



Schedule the right kind of doctor's visit.

★ **Decide** what kind of visit your child needs.

A **well visit** (checkup), to talk about your child's overall health. Allow more time for a well visit than a sick visit.

Your talk may include:

- How your child is growing
- How your child is sleeping or eating
- What your child does for fun
- Vaccinations (shots)
- Home life
- Learning and school
- Milestones

A **sick visit**, to talk about a specific health problem, such as:

- Sore throat
- Rash
- Follow-up asthma care
- Upset stomach

★ **Tell** the person scheduling your visit at the clinic:

- Which kind of visit you need (sick or well visit)
- How many children need to see a doctor (each child needs a different appointment)

★ **Plan** what you want to talk about with your child's doctor. Write down the main things you want to get out of the visit.

After you schedule your visit, write down up to 3 things you want to get out of it.

For my child's **well visit**, I want to ...

*For example: I want to know if my child is gaining enough weight.
I need to get a form filled out for school sports.
I want to know if my toddler is saying enough words for his age.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For my child's **sick visit**, I want to ...

*For example: I want to know how to help my child feel better.
I want to know how to keep my other children from getting sick.
I want to get a referral for my child to keep getting therapy.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Take all important items and info with you.

For your child's doctor's visit, you need to take:

- List of 1 to 3 things to talk about
- List of your child's symptoms
- List of what you have done for the symptoms
- Your child's medicine in a bag
- Snacks
- Diapers and wipes (if needed)
- Toys and books for your child to play with
- Insurance card and ID card
- This handbook

At your child's visit:

If possible, please do not take your other children with you. This will help you:

- Keep your other children from getting sick.
- Focus on what the doctor is saying.

Please do not use your cell phone, unless you are:

- Taking notes (tell your doctor if this is what you are doing)
- Using your calendar to schedule other doctors visits

Write down the info to take with you.

For a **well visit**, bring info about:

School (How they are doing in school—grades, learning, behavior)

Diet (What my child normally eats and any problems they have eating)

Activities my child does (sports, exercise, dance, etc.)

For a **sick visit**, use this table to list your child’s symptoms.

What was the symptom?	When did the symptom start?	What did I do to treat this?	Did the treatment help?
<i>(example) Cough</i>	<i>2 days ago</i>	<i>Cough medicine</i>	<i>Not coughing as much, but it helped some</i>

If your child has had fever:

How high did it get? _____ When did it start? _____

S.T.A.R.

Schedule. Take. Ask. Repeat.



Ask all your questions.

- Make a list of any questions you have before the visit and show it to your nurse.
- Your doctor wants you to ask questions. It helps them help your child.
- Don't be afraid to stop the doctor when you don't understand.
- Don't be afraid of asking too many questions.
- Take notes on any questions you think of during the visit.

Practice asking your child's doctor questions. Here are some ways you can ask questions.

- I am not familiar with that word. Could you tell me what it means?
- I didn't get that. Could you say that again?
- I'm not sure I understand what you mean. Can you explain it to me in a different way?
- Can you tell me more about _____?

Write down your questions before the visit. As the doctor answers them, fill in the blanks.

Fill out the top part of this page before your visit.

Questions I want answered:

Check your list—on page 3—of things you want to get out of the visit and make sure your questions help you with those.



Fill out the bottom part during the visit.

I talked to Dr. _____ Nurse _____

Answers to my questions:

If I have more questions, I can call: _____.

S.T.A.R.

Schedule. Take. Ask. Repeat.



Repeat back to the doctor what you understand about your visit.

You could start this by saying to the doctor: “You just told me a lot of information. Let me be sure I understand ...”

For a **well visit**, repeat what the doctor said about your child’s health. Be sure you understand ways you can help your child be healthy.

For a **sick visit**, repeat what you understand about your child’s health problem and what you can do to best take care of your child. Be sure you understand:

- The name of the health problem
- How to help with your child’s symptoms
- How and why to use any new medicine
- Plans for any other tests or doctor visits
 - ◆ Who will schedule these?
 - ◆ If being scheduled for you, what is the date, time, and place?

Fill in the blanks on the next page to help you remember what your child’s doctor said. Some may not apply to your visit.



Name of the health problem: _____

New medicines: _____

- Paper prescription Prescription called into the pharmacy

When to refill: _____

How to refill: _____

Other doctor's visits:

Doctor's name: _____ Clinic: _____

Phone number: _____

I need to call and make an appointment

This appointment was made for me.

Appointment Date: _____ **Time:** _____



Way to go! You got a gold S.T.A.R. for your child's health.

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