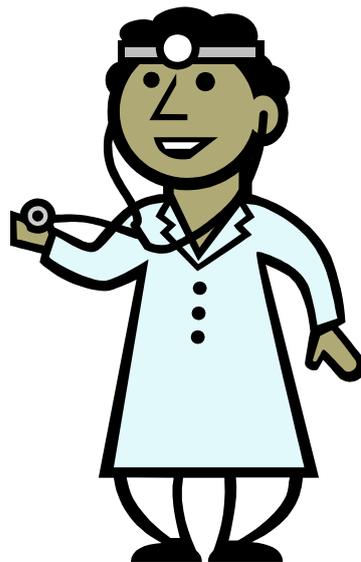


ASD Family Help

Your local Autism Support Charity

NHS
Berkshire West

DOCTORS



DOCTORS:

Where? <http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/Wokingham/Results/4/-0.836/51.413/4/24202?distance=25>

How? By  phone &/or  email

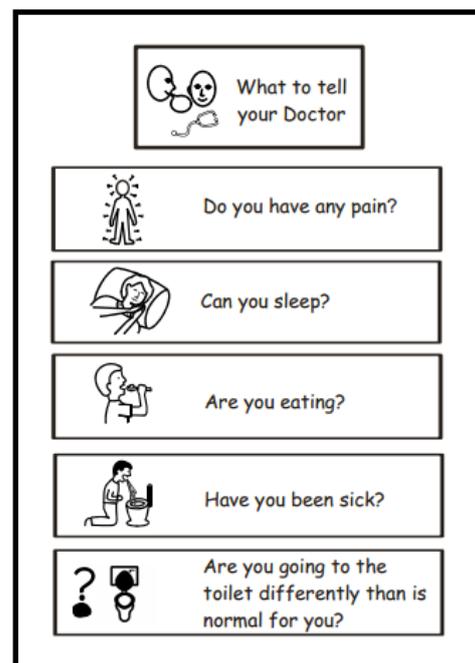
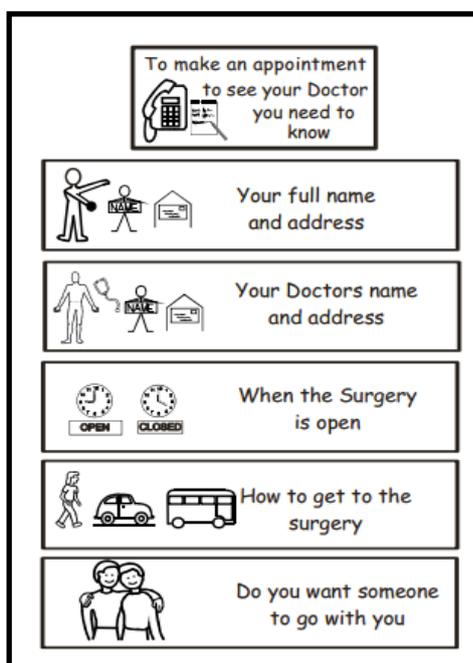
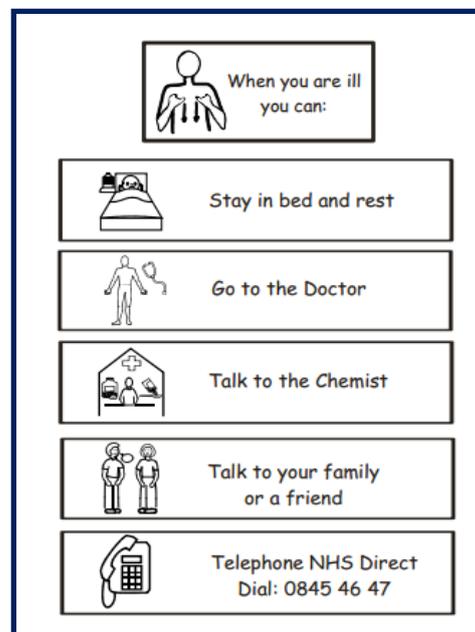
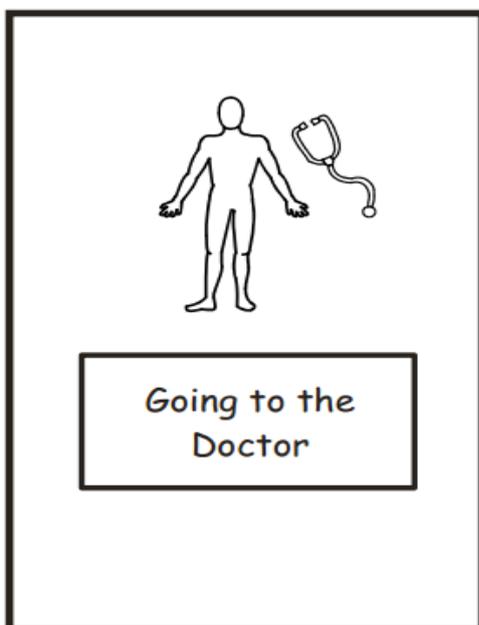
When to contact: As soon as you need treatment

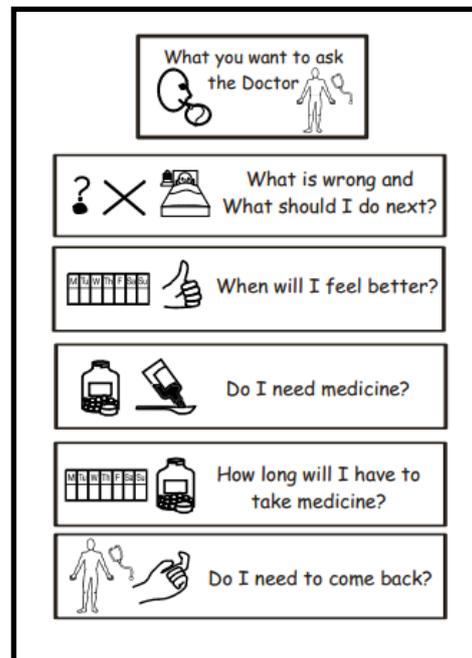
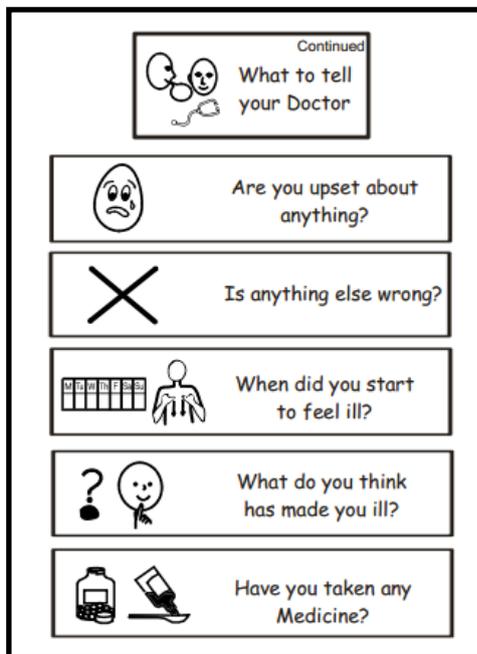
How Often? As and when required

Useful Links and helpful advice

<http://www.easyhealth.org.uk/content/visit-doctor> - This link shows a video of a visit to the doctors

<http://www.easyhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/GoingtotheDoctor.pdf>





<http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/out-and-about/doctor-preparing-to-visit.aspx>

Going to the doctor can be a very stressful experience for people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their carers.

This information provides reasons why this experience may be difficult for a person with an ASD and suggests strategies that can be used to help improve the situation.

Possible triggers

Fear of the unexpected

Although a visit to the GP can provide the structure that people with autism need, in that there is a definite routine involved, it can still cause anxiety. This can be due to the fact that in most cases it is unknown exactly what a doctor will do. The unstructured time in the waiting room and the other patients present can be difficult for a person with an ASD. The unfamiliarity of the consultation room and equipment used can seem quite daunting. Alternatively, negative experiences from the past and associations with pain can influence an individual's future associations and fear of the experience.

Sensory difficulties

Sensory issues can be a large factor in a person with autism's negative experience at the doctors.

Lights

Sensitivity to certain lighting can be a particular problem for people with an ASD. For instance strip fluorescent lighting can be experienced as painful and distracting.

Touch (tactile system)

If an individual is hypo-sensitive to touch they may have a high threshold to pain or temperature and not mind heavier pressure when touched. This could cause difficulty when being examined by the doctor as the person with autism may not appear to be

in pain but could, for example, have broken a bone. They may be unable to decode the different body sensations to recognise it as pain.

They can display unusual responses to pain such as laughing, humming or stripping which may make it difficult for the doctor to recognise and identify the problem. It may be that change in behaviour is the only indicator that a person with an ASD is in pain. On the other hand, a person with an ASD may be hyper-sensitive to touch. They may experience the slightest touch as uncomfortable or even painful. They will therefore withdraw from touch which can cause difficulties when a doctor is trying to conduct a physical examination. Materials used could also be a problem, for instance the paper sheet on the examination table, cotton wool or plasters may cause particular discomfort.

Noise

Some doctor's surgeries use buzzers to indicate when it is a patient's turn to see the doctor. They may also have music playing in a waiting room. Crying babies or children in the waiting room may also be quite noisy. For those with hyper-sensitive hearing, these types of noises can be magnified and become quite disturbing. Also with this heightened volume, surrounding sounds could become distorted. For the person with an ASD, this could cause difficulty in recognising sounds, such as a name being called for instance.

Personal space and body awareness

A crowded waiting room may be quite distressing for someone with an ASD who may need their personal space. Similarly close proximity to the doctor could be quite uncomfortable for the patient.

Problems can also occur when trying to explain where pain is experienced. Those who have difficulty with body awareness may not be able to experience where different body parts are.

Communication

It can be a problem for patients with an ASD to indicate where pain is, due to communication difficulties. It may also be difficult for them to understand what a doctor is asking or to understand when the doctor is explaining what they are going to do to them.

Out-of-hours services

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/doctors/Pages/out-of-hours-services.aspx>

The NHS pledges to provide services at a time that's convenient for you.

Outside normal surgery hours you can still phone your GP surgery, but you'll usually be directed to an out-of-hours service. The out-of-hours period is from 6.30pm to 8.00am on weekdays and all day at weekends and on bank holidays.

If it is not an immediate emergency then call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 (or call NHS 111 if it is available in your area). NHS Direct (or NHS 111) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can provide medical advice and details of the best local

service that can provide care. Telephone consultations and triage (an assessment of how urgent your medical problem is) are an important part of all out-of-hours care. Since 2004, GPs have been able to choose whether to provide 24-hour care for their patients or to transfer responsibility for out-of-hours services to primary care trusts (PCTs). From April 1 2013 this will be dealt with by NHS Commissioning Board Area Teams.

NHS Commissioning Board Area Teams are responsible for providing a high-quality service for the local population. Some NHS Commissioning Board Area Teams provide care themselves. Others provide care through external organisations. This means different areas can have slightly different services.

Types of out-of-hours care

Out-of-hours cover may include some or all of the services below:

- GPs working in A&E departments or minor injuries units (MIUs)
- teams of healthcare professionals working in primary care centres, A&E departments, MIUs or NHS walk-in centres
- healthcare professionals (other than doctors) making home visits, following a detailed clinical assessment
- ambulance services moving patients to places where they can be seen by a doctor or nurse, to reduce the need for home visits

You can also visit an NHS walk-in centre (WiC) or Minor injuries units(MIUs). These can provide treatment for minor injuries or illnesses such as cuts, bruises and rashes. They have proved to be a successful complementary service to traditional GP and A&E services. Some NHS WiCs offer access to doctors as well as nurses. However, they are not designed for treating long-term conditions or immediately life-threatening problems. You don't need to be registered and you don't need an appointment. Any member of the public can simply walk in to be seen regardless of where they are registered. Some offer pre-booked appointments.