



how to prepare for and cope with a trip to the emergency room

tips to prepare for an emergency room visit

- **be prepared for an emergency, before it happens.** make sure you (and your caregiver) know where the closest emergency room is, its phone number and how to get there. if you have several hospitals near you to choose from, figure out which one has the best pediatric care. keep a list of any medications your child is on, allergies they have, pre-existing conditions, blood type, up-to-date immunizations and pediatrician contact information. make sure to have your child's insurance card with you at all times and include a photocopy with your lists of important, emergency information. if your child has a caregiver or is in school, make sure they have a consent to treat form that authorizes your child's treatment in your absence.
- **if you're not the best when it comes to organization, especially in a crisis, plan ahead.**
- **model brave behavior and positive coping every time you take your child to the doctor.** If you are afraid of getting shots or going to the dentist or doctor, it is very likely that your child will be too.
- **read books about going to the doctor or emergency room.** picture books can be a great tool for helping children understand what to expect, as well as how to process the experience afterwards.
- **buy your child a doctor kit so they can play with and explore medical tools.** Role-play with your child how doctors use their tools to make children feel better.
- **pack a fun, emergency travel kit.** the kit can be filled with distracting games and toys, crayons and pads, stickers and other favorites that will help distract your child during an emergency room visit.

remember, the hospital can be very scary for both you and your child - it is hard for kids to understand how something that hurts or something that is scary can help them.

tips to cope with an emergency room visit

- **choose your words carefully.** keep your language simple and reassuring.
- **if you don't know the answer to a question it is better to say that you don't know than to mislead your child.** he trusts you to tell the truth.



- **try not to convey your own anxiety and worries to your child (or in front of your child).** your child will look to you to see how he should respond. the more confident you are that everything will be ok, the more confident he will be.
- **allow and encourage your child to express his fears.** give your child permission to be afraid and let him know that it is ok to cry.
- **listen and respond to your child's questions.** tune in to your child's expressions, body language and feelings as well. most likely, he will be very scared and confused.
- **use distraction techniques to take your child's mind off any pain or anxiety.** bring a portable video player, books, music, etc....sing songs, use humor!
- **as much as you can, ask the medical team what will happen and explain it in simple terms to your child (honestly, sensitively and calmly).** children feel more secure when they can predict what will happen next. talk to your child about the equipment, what parts of their body it will touch, what it will sound like and how it will feel.
- **don't tell your child a procedure won't hurt, if you know it will.** be realistic. explain that the hurt will only be for a moment.
- **allow your child to feel more in control of what's going on by asking the medical staff questions.**
- **remain with your child (if you are allowed), but only if you can stay calm during any procedures.**
- **be prepared to help your child cope with the experience even after it's over.** once you're home, spend some time with your child reassuring him, talking about what happened and answering any questions that he might still have. your child's memory for medical experiences plays an important role in his response to future medical events.

seedlingsgroup is a team of child development experts and psychologists that helps you navigate the challenges of raising a happy, healthy child.

simply put, we help nurture nature.

call. 212 966 7273

write. info@seedlingsgroup.com

visit. www.seedlingsgroup.com