

HEALTH & SAFETY: MANAGING APPOINTMENTS

“Preparing for the Healthcare Appointment”

BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual’s health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This is the second of four Fact Sheets regarding Managing Appointments.

Objectives

Reader will understand what information is essential to bring to appointment.

Reader will understand what needs to be considered in preparing an individual for an appointment.

Definitions

Healthcare Provider: Any licensed physician, nurse, dentist, or clinician that requires an appointment and evaluation to provide services and recommendations to an individual.

Facts

- A healthcare provider may cancel an appointment if the person arrives late per their practice.
- A healthcare provider may discharge an individual from services if there is a pattern of missed appointments.
- It is essential that the person accompanying the individual to the appointment:
 - Knows the person
 - Understands the purpose of the appointment
 - Communicates on behalf of the person as needed

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Ensure Pre-appointment medication, if any, is available in the home the day prior to the appointment.

2. Take pertinent information to the appointment:

- Name and contact information of Guardian/Healthcare Representative
- Insurance cards and photo identification
- List of current medications and medication history (if available) including medicine that was recently changed, reason for the change and any problems with medications in the past.
- Medical/surgical history; current tracking sheets, immunization records and other pertinent information related to the appointment
- Information /questions provided by the individual's support team including events leading up to current problem/issue
- Completed "Healthcare visit/consultation form" as used by the agency with reason for appointment written on it
- Contact information, directions and parking information for the healthcare provider's office
- List of other current healthcare providers for the person with their contact information
- Name and phone and fax number of a contact person from the provider agency if applicable
- Name, location, and phone and fax number of preferred pharmacy

3. Prepare the Individual:

- Obtain orders regarding eating or holding medication as needed.
- Administer any necessary routine and PRN medication as ordered.
- Ensure the individual has time to have personal hygiene needs met and time to eat (if allowed) prior to the appointment.
- Ensure the individual is clean and dressed appropriately in clothing that can be easily removed if needed.
- Prepare snacks and drinks as needed especially if a long distance to the appointment.
- Prepare necessary supplies for hygiene needs such as wipes, adult under garments, and change of clothing.
- Prepare activities, items to keep occupied in the event you have to wait.
- Explain what will happen in language appropriate for the individual's level of understanding and anxiety with input from the support team.
- Provide desensitization as needed and outlined in behavior support plan.
- Allow appropriate travel time to prevent rushing the individual. If running late for any reason, notify the healthcare provider's office and let them know of the situation and anticipated arrival time and verify whether the healthcare provider can still see the individual.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early particularly if first appointment unless otherwise directed by provider's office.

4. It is essential that whoever accompanies the individual to the appointment knows the individual, knows what the appointment is for and understands what to bring to the appointment. Staff should notify their supervisor if they have any question regarding an upcoming appointment.

Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: A healthcare provider will always give a person 3 chances to make the scheduled appointments.
2. It is important to bring the following to an appointment:
 - A. Insurance information
 - B. List of current medications
 - C. Health history information
 - D. All of the above
3. If you are unsure of the reason for an appointment:
 - A. Go ahead and the healthcare practitioner will figure it out
 - B. Call someone to get the needed information
 - C. Cancel the appointment immediately

References

Prater, Christopher D. MD, Medical Care of Adults with Mental Retardation. American Family Physician Volume 73, Number 12. June 2006

Barclay, Laurie MD, Strategies Recommended for Screening and Treating Patients with Intellectual Disabilities. www.medscape.com/viewarticle/562241_print

Stoppler, Mellissa MD, Getting the Most of Your Doctors Appointment. www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=47165
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Mary Ciccarelli, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Clinical Medicine, Associate Chair of Education in Pediatrics, Indiana University School of Medicine

Related Resources

Managing Appointment Series Fact Sheets: "Initial Contact", "During the Appointment", and "After the Appointment"

Managing Appointment Series Checklists: "Initial Contact", "Preparing for the Healthcare Appointment", "During the Appointment", and "After the Appointment"

Health Record Form

Medical Appointment Form

Learning Assessment Answers

1. False
2. D
3. B

Outreach Services

1-866-429-5290 • outreach@fssa.in.gov • DDRSOutreach.IN.gov

As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, Outreach and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit DDRSOutreach.IN.gov and www.iidc.indiana.edu/training.



Indiana Family & Social Services Administration
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