

How to be a good patient in this practice

We want you to get the best care possible in this office and hope to care for you for many years to come. If there is anything *we* can do to give you better care, please let us know. Yet there are some expectations we have for our patients. We ask that you read the list below and do your best to abide by these suggestions:

1. **Do not apologize for your symptoms** – It is a very self-conscious thing to be sitting on the exam table. You can feel kind of stupid at times when your symptoms don't seem to make sense. But if you had these symptoms, then please tell us what they are. It is not your fault that they don't make sense.
2. **Wear many layers of clothing** – We generally have no idea if our office will be hot or cold. Some mysterious person controls that and we have yet to locate them. Hence, you should come prepared for a freezing cold room or a furnace.
3. **Kids are sometimes not perfect** – Since we take care of many children, we have come upon the great truth: kids are not always sedate and obedient. This may be a shock for some parents (who the rest of us resent), but we do realize that your children may misbehave sometimes. We don't think you are a horrible parent because your child is not “seen but not heard.”
4. **Earwax is not embarrassing** – It is a mystery why people always apologize about earwax. It is not a moral defect that brought the wax to your ears, and we won't go home and tell our families about the wax we see in your ear. It's OK to have wax. Honest!
5. **We believe you** – When your child has had a fever for 5 days and then that fever disappears the moment you step into the office, we don't think you made the fever up. And *please*, if your body fluids are a different color than normal; do not bring in a sample for us to see. Just tell us what it looked like. Please!
6. **“No news is good news” is a lie** – If a reasonable amount of time has passed and you have not heard the results of a test, please contact us. We have a better system than most offices at keeping track of things, but things can be lost, ignored, or forgotten.
7. **The most precious thing you can give us is trust** - You should never put your life into someone's hands if you don't trust them. That does not mean you can't question us (please do!), but it does mean that if you don't trust our judgment, then it is probably time to find another doctor. We are happy to say that this does not happen very often.
8. **Stinky diapers smell bad** – Please don't stick them in the trash can. There is nothing subtle about that smell. We have special bags for that kind of thing.
9. **There is no such thing as a dumb question** – except for one you should have asked, but did not. If you are confused about something you have been told, please ask someone to clarify it.
10. **Don't save the most important thing for the “oh by the way” question at the end of your visit** – It may be an uncomfortable thing you want to ask, or you may be scared you have a horrible disease, but if something is really worrying you, please ask it early in your visit.

Hopefully these guidelines will help you as you strive to be the “perfect patient.” If you stick to these guidelines, perhaps we will name a wing after you or take your birthday as a holiday. Who knows?