

Next Steps

A series of resource guides for neurodivergent youth



Managing Appointments

In this guide, we'll explore tools and tips to follow as you prepare for an appointment.

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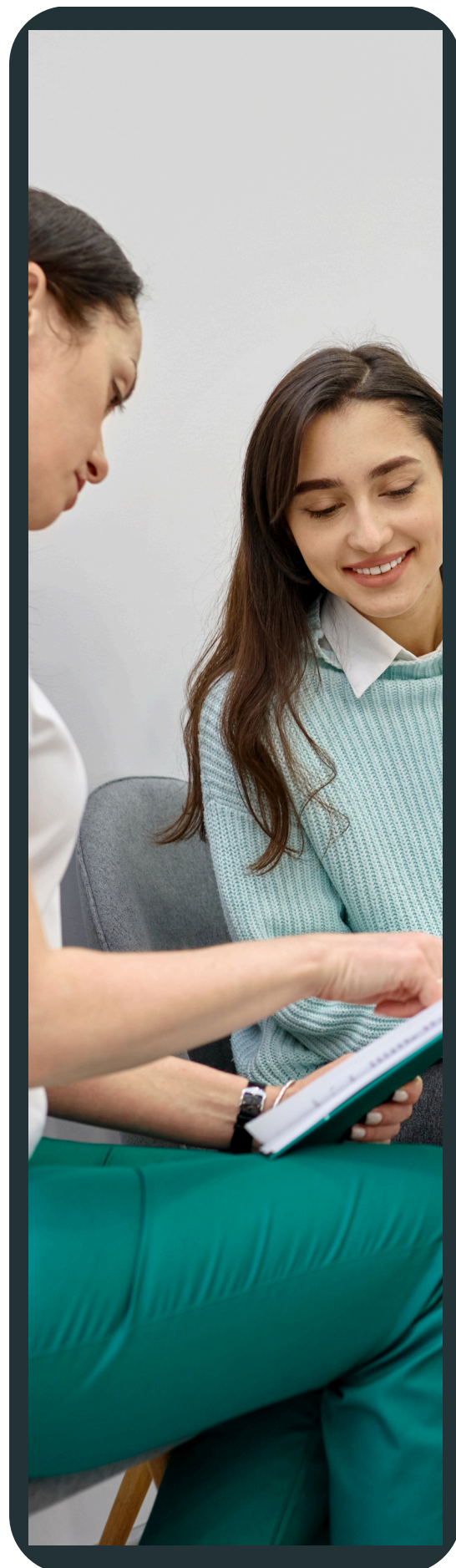
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Appointment Management

In life, there are a variety of reasons that you may need to schedule appointments. These may include health appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.), beauty treatments (haircut, nails, etc.) or paramedical services (physiotherapy, dietitian, etc.). Our schedules can be quite busy, making it challenging to plan appointments. Fortunately, there are several apps and tools that can be used to support you with this. We'll explore these, along with some general guidelines to follow as you prepare for your appointment.

Appointment Types and Frequency

Below is a list of possible appointments, with a general frequency recommendation identified in the table by an (X). However, for medical or paramedical care appointments, it is important to consult your practitioner to establish an appropriate frequency suited to your needs.

Frequency	~ 2 months	6 months	1 year	2-3 years	At your discretion or as recommended by your practitioner
Common medical care					
Doctor			X		
Dentist		X			
Optometrist				X	
Paramedical services as needed					
Physiotherapy					X
Occupational therapy					X
Speech therapy					X
Psychology					X
Dietitian					X
Orthodontist					X
Blood test					X

Frequency	~ 2 months	6 months	1 year	2-3 years	At your discretion or as recommended by your practitioner
Beauty or other care					
Hairdresser	X (short hair)	X (long hair)			
Nails					X
Hair removal					X
Veterinarian					X

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

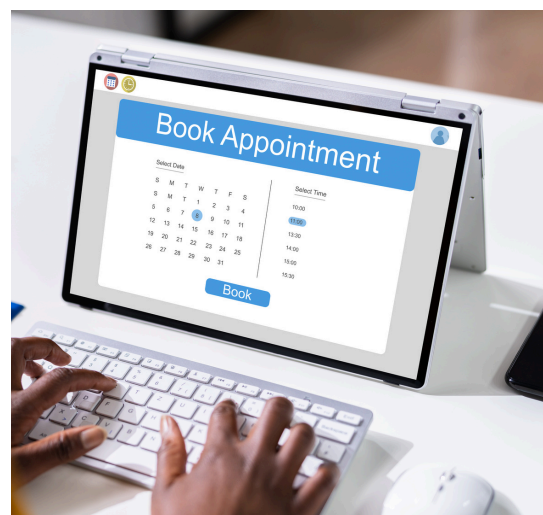
- An emergency is when your life is at risk or you have serious health problems, for example: difficulty breathing, chest pain, or injuries caused by a car accident.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call 988.

- If you have suicidal thoughts and/or thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else.

How to Make an Appointment

- To make an appointment, you can call the clinic directly or check if an online platform is available. To find their phone number, simply search for the clinic on Google.
- In some clinics, a reminder system is in place: You may receive an email or a phone call a few days before to confirm your appointment.
- For medical care or paramedical services, you can often book your next appointment with your practitioner or at reception. It is important to note this date either in your planner or in your phone's calendar.



Please note: There are also walk-in medical clinics. Here are some links that can help you find one:

[Champlain Healthline](#)

[Community Health Centres Ontario](#)

[Walk-In Clinics Ontario](#)

[Appletree Medical Centres](#)

[North East Healthline](#)

If you are looking for a healthcare provider, the resources below can support your search:

- [Finding Health Care - Ottawa Public Health](#)
- [Find a Service - Ontario.ca](#)
- [Community Clinics - Ontario Health at Home](#)

Preparing for Your Appointment

- 1 Check in advance if you need to request time off from work, and also confirm the duration of your appointment.
- 2 Confirm the time you need to leave for the appointment:
 - Check if you need to arrive early (some medical appointments require you to arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled time).
 - Planning your trip with Google Maps will help you determine travel times and when to leave. Try to leave 10 to 15 minutes early to avoid delays caused by traffic or unforeseen events.
- 3 Check if there are any special instructions, such as not eating before the appointment or avoiding deodorant.
 - If you need to fast, try to make your appointment early in the morning and bring snacks for after the appointment, if needed.
- 4 Some establishments have a “What to Expect” section on their website to help you prepare for your appointment. You can also watch online videos to familiarize yourself with new medical procedures.
- 5 Prepare and make sure you have your essential documents (listed below) in your bag, in a folder or stored in an application.
- 6 Set an alarm or reminder on your phone for when you need to leave.
- 7 Bring everything you need to see and hear well (e.g., your glasses), as well as tools that support your regulation (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, etc.).
- 8 Consider asking a family member or friend to accompany you and share appointment details with them if necessary.
- 9 Plan for time after your appointment to pick up your medication if you are given a prescription.

Here are some documents that are important to bring on the day of your appointment and to consider for the appointment:

- ☒ Health card
- ☒ The reason for the appointment
- ☒ Your calendar to check your availability

Cont.

- ☒ List of your medications and doses (See resource: [Medication Management Tool](#)). You can ask your pharmacy to print an up-to-date list of your medications, or some applications can help you with the management of your medications, such as:

- My Therapy Meds & Pill Reminder

[Google Version](#)

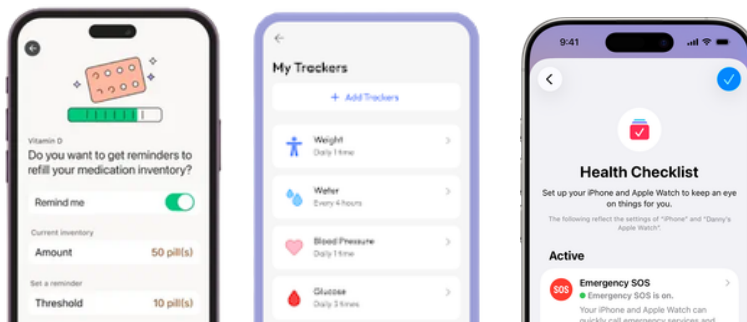
[Apple Version](#)

- Pillo: Pill Reminder and Tracker

[Google Version](#)

- Health Application

[Apple Version](#)



- ☒ Write any relevant questions to help you stay on track during your appointment, and write down your symptoms if necessary
- ☒ Payment card
- ☒ Insurance card, if applicable
- ☒ Wear loose-fitting or easily removable clothing, if necessary (e.g., a jacket with a short-sleeved shirt underneath), to facilitate certain tests such as vaccinations or blood pressure measurements.
- ☒ An immunization record book so your practitioner can record new vaccines
- ☒ Bring requisition forms from your doctor if needed (e.g., ultrasounds)
- ☒ Inform your practitioner of any allergies or reactions to medications you have experienced in the past



[Here is a sheet that can help you prepare for your appointment.](#)



Please note that some hospitals use a secure internet portal such as « My Chart » which allows you to access certain parts of your medical file and compile relevant information for your appointment, such as: a list of your medications, your allergies, special instructions for your next appointment, etc.

For more information on the portal, you can visit the links below:

- [Cheo.ca](#)
- [Youtube.com](#)

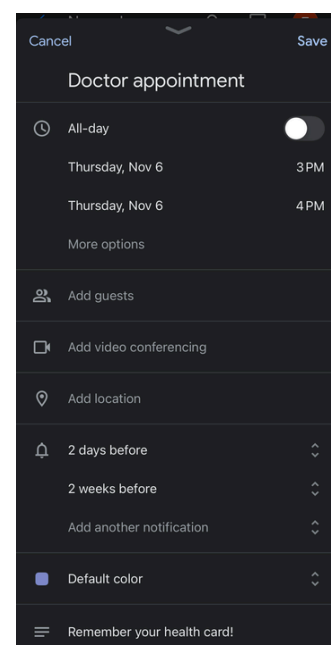


During Your Appointment

- Request an interpreter if needed. This person can take notes for you or translate if necessary. You can also take notes yourself or ask a family member or friend to help you.
- Let your practitioner know your goal at the beginning of your appointment. It is important to inform your practitioner of any significant changes in your health, including sleep, weight, appetite, energy levels, changes in medication, etc.
 - [Here is a resource that could be used to track changes to your health:](#)
- Communicate your symptoms or concerns to your practitioner.
- Ask them to repeat or provide clarification if needed.
- Confirm the plan or tasks to be completed with your practitioner at the end of your appointment (e.g., filling a prescription, making a follow-up appointment, going for blood tests, etc.)

Steps to Manage Your Appointments

- 1 Once your appointment is confirmed, add the date and time to your calendar (either on your phone or in a planner). If you have documents or information you need to bring to your appointment, many apps allow you to add notes to the calendar. This allows you to keep all the information you need in one place.
- 2 Add a reminder to your calendar at least two weeks before your appointment, just in case you forget or double-booked yourself that day. This gives you enough time to cancel your appointment or your other plans.
- 3 Add a reminder to your calendar 2 days before your appointment to give yourself time to prepare your documents in advance and plan your departure time. Many clinics charge a fee if you miss your appointment or if you don't provide 24 to 48 hours' notice for a cancellation.
 - An appointment can sometimes bring up feelings of anxiety or lead to stress. By preparing in advance, you'll be able to decide whether to go, postpone, or cancel should you not feel up to it.
 - Please note that practitioners have busy schedules, so it is possible that your next appointment may be postponed by a few weeks or even months.
- 4 If you scheduled a follow-up appointment, note it in your calendar. If you are responsible for scheduling the next appointment, note the time frame in which you need to make your next appointment and schedule a reminder in your calendar. Please note there may be a delay before you can reschedule your appointment, depending on your availability and/or the clinic's. For example, if you need to make an appointment with your dentist every six months, plan to schedule your appointment about a month in advance.



- 5 If you need to fill a prescription, ask your practitioner if they can send it directly to your pharmacy. Most pharmacies will call or text you when your prescription is ready to pick up. You can also go directly to your pharmacy after your appointment.

There are several tools to help you manage your appointments:

- Phone apps:
 - [Apple Calendar](#)
 - [Google Calendar](#)
 - [Tick Tick: To Do List & Calendar](#)
- Visual calendar (e.g., whiteboard placed in a location you frequent often, such as on your refrigerator)
- Planner



Prioritizing Your Mental Health During Appointments

Some appointments can bring up feelings of anxiety and/or overwhelming sensory experiences. Here are some tips and tricks you can consider to prepare in advance:

- Discuss your concerns before the appointment with a friend, family member or your practitioner.
- Before your appointment, inform your practitioner or the receptionist of any accommodations you may need (e.g., sunglasses, a calm space, noise-cancelling headphones).
- Watch videos to see what an appointment may look like
- Ask your questions
- Practice mindfulness activities before the appointment, while in the waiting room, and/or the evening before the appointment (e.g., deep breathing, yoga, the 5 senses, drinking water, etc.)



References

- [Medications Worksheet - National Institute on Aging](#)
- [Changes to Discuss - National Institute on Aging](#)