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YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN

Reprinted by:
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JANUARY 2011

IS IT TIME TO GO TO THE DOCTOR?

Wally Cat would like to remind you that it is important to go to the doctor. Going to the doctor is not always fun, but there are a lot of important things that happen at the doctor's office. You may even go to the doctor's office when you are feeling fine, not just when you are sick. When you go to the doctor for a yearly checkup, he will check if you are growing the way you should be. The doctor may ask you questions and give you time to ask questions. Wally Cat knows that going to the doctor is important and wants you to know what may happen while you are there.

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The visit starts when you enter the office

When you are waiting to see the doctor you will be in an area called the waiting room. Your parents or guardian may sign a few forms to let them know you are waiting and let them know of any issues that might be happening to you.

The actual checkup may start when you get called to the back offices. The nurse may come to get you. First, she may take your height and weight. Then the nurse will take you to a room and may take your blood pressure and your temperature.



- **Blood pressure** — there is a cuff on the arm that gets tighter and tighter. This lets the nurse and doctor know how hard your heart is working to pump blood through your body.
- **Temperature** — you probably have had your temperature checked at home when you were not feeling well. The nurse will use a thermometer to take your temperature. Your temperature should be between 97 and 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit when you are feeling well. If your temperature is higher, it may mean that your body is fighting off an infection.

The nurse may also check your hearing and your eyesight. If it is determined that you are having trouble with either your eyes or your ears, you may have to go to another doctor who focuses on just those body parts.

All these measurements and tests will go onto your medical chart which the doctor will look over before coming in to see you.

The doctor will come in next

When the doctor comes in, she will probably ask you how you are feeling and if you are having any problems or concerns. Then she will start the checkup. The doctor will listen to your lungs through a special instrument called a

stethoscope; she will also look inside your eyes, ears, nose, and throat.

Next the doctor may check your reflexes. This is done with a little rubber hammer that is tapped on your knee. Then the doctor will examine your body. He might feel around your belly. There are a lot of important organs in the middle of your body and the doctor wants to make sure there are no problems.

At the end of the checkup you may ask questions that you may have thought about during the checkup. Even though someone might be in the exam room with you, do not be afraid to ask. The doctor has heard all sorts of questions. Whoever is at the checkup with you may ask questions at this time too.

After your checkup, if you stay well, you will not have to go back for another year. It will be time for Wally Cat to go back too!

True or false:

1. The only time you would ever go to the Doctor's office is when you are sick. **T or F**
2. You may get your height, weight, blood pressure, and temperature taken before you see the doctor. **T or F**
3. It is always OK to ask the doctor questions. **T or F**

REFERENCES:

- Kids Health. Sept, 2007 "Going to the Doctor." Nemours Foundation. www.kidshealth.org

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