

# Tips for Youth Patients

This is a collection of tips to help you feel as confident as possible going into your appointment! No matter what you booked an appointment for, there are a few essential things you should know as a patient that could be helpful in your healthcare journey. If you're interested in learning more about provider confidentiality, what to expect at an appointment, and how to access healthcare services, check out the videos at the end of this tip sheet!

## What to bring

- ☐ **A list of questions about your health**  
These questions could be about your body, mental health, sexuality, substance use, etc. If you're unsure what to ask your provider (doctor, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant), watch the AMAZE videos at the end of this tip sheet!
- ☐ **Photo ID**  
(if you have one!)
- ☐ **List of medications you're taking**  
Look at the labels on the bottle to find the drug name and dose amount (for example: Methylphenidate, 18g, once per day.)
- ☐ **Insurance card**  
You may or may not need insurance depending on the health center you go to! If you're unsure, you can call and ask the health center if they require insurance to cover the cost of services. If you're wondering about how to get insurance, you can ask the staff at the health center! You might also ask your parent or guardian to help you with your insurance card.
- ☐ **Background info**  
You might have to be ready to talk about past illnesses, surgeries, allergies, medications, periods, and family medical history.

## What to expect

Physical exams may include measuring height, weight, and blood pressure. A provider may listen to your heart and lungs to check your breathing. They might also examine sensitive areas of the body.

Feeling embarrassed, uncomfortable, or stressed during this process is completely normal!

### Did you know?

You can ask your provider for the weight measurement to be optional or to not share the measurement.

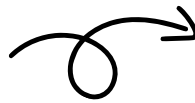
# Confidentiality

## CONFIDENTIALITY = PRIVACY

Confidentiality means keeping something private. Part of a healthcare provider's job is to keep your conversations private. This means the provider will not tell anybody, including parents or guardians about your visit. Privacy isn't just about what you say out loud, it includes notes, bills, and visit summaries.

Depending on your age and what state you live in, most conversations about pregnancy, STIs, HIV, or substance use may be kept private.

**If you're not sure if a topic will be confidential, feel free to ask your provider!**



Which parts of the appointment will be kept private, and what will be shared?

There are times when health care providers must break confidentiality. This is because providers are legally considered "mandatory reporters." This means that they are required to report any suspected abuse, neglect or violence.

For example, if a teen or young adult patient is thinking of hurting themselves or others, providers must tell the patient's parents or guardians. This helps young people get the support they need, like meeting with a therapist. You can learn more about youth suicide prevention, warning signs, and where to get help [here](#).

You can request to have billing documents sent to your email only and not mailed to your home address. Ask the clinic for support in completing any paperwork to maintain your privacy.

## Know your rights!

Confidential services change in different states—you can check [this site](#) to learn which sexual and reproductive health services could be confidential in your state.

### **You have the right to talk privately with your health care provider.**

This means you can ask your parent or guardian to leave the room. Usually, the provider will ask them to step out, but you may have to ask for it if they don't.

It can actually be helpful to talk with your parent or guardian before you get to the appointment. You might tell them that you are old enough to have some private time with the provider, and you hope they will let you have a one-on-one talk.

I trust you, but some of these topics are embarrassing, so it's easier to talk about them by myself.

# Advocate for yourself!

Your health care provider is there to help you. It is important to be honest about your health and experiences so they can give you the best answers to your questions. If you ever feel uncomfortable with your provider and you feel like you cannot be honest with them, you can always ask for a different provider!

## You have the right to say NO!

The provider might give you suggestions based on their medical knowledge, but you have every right to say no if you are uncomfortable following the advice. You also have the right to say no to any physical exam if it makes you uneasy.

If something makes you uncomfortable, you can ask for alternatives.

As one example, if a provider asks to do a sexually transmitted infection (STI) test and you do not want them to take a throat swab, you can ask if you can collect the throat swab sample yourself.

**No matter how old you are, you have choices and should ask providers for all of your options!**

## You could say...

**"I'm not comfortable answering that."**

**"Why do you need that information?"**

**"Can I do this test by myself?"**

**"I actually don't want to get an IUD without something to manage the pain. What are my options?"**

**"Could I have a printed summary of my appointment so that I can go over it on my own?"**

**"What does that mean for me?"**

**"Can you break that down for me? I'm a bit confused."**

## AMAZE videos



Puberty: What is Doctor Confidentiality?



Accessing Sexual Health Care for Minors



Yearly Checkup: Everything You Need to Know

## Resources

- [Confidential services by state](#)
- [Washington-specific services](#)
- [Teen Health Hub WA](#)
- [Questions You Can Ask Your Doctor](#)