

Healthcare and environment



A healthcare visit has to happen, with or without money. And most sensory load can be removed for free.

FREE · PRACTICAL

Five ways to reduce sensory load before a visit

s. 2

Environment checklist

s. 3

This is yours. You do not need an account, an email address or money. Print only the pages you need, and pass it on if it helps someone.

Five ways to reduce sensory load

A healthcare visit is a sensory storm: strangers, lights, waiting, touch. Most of the load can be planned away before you leave home.

Who it is for: families and support workers taking a non-speaking autistic person to a doctor, dentist or clinic.

1 Book the quiet slot
Ask for the first appointment of the day or the last. Waiting rooms are the hardest part, so aim to skip them entirely.

2 Send information ahead
Email or ring in advance: how the person communicates, what frightens them, what helps. Staff who know this make fewer mistakes.

3 Rehearse the route, not the procedure
Walk past the building, sit in the car park, look at photos of the entrance. Familiar surroundings take a large slice off the load.

4 Protect the senses on the day
Ear defenders, sunglasses, a familiar jumper, a favourite object in hand. Keep the morning empty of other demands.

5 One adult speaks
Agree beforehand who talks to staff. The other adult stays fully with the person. Two conversations at once doubles the noise.

TAKE WITH YOU

- ☐  Ear defenders or headphones
- ☐  Preferred drink and snack
- ☐  A familiar comfort object or place
- ☐  List of medication and past visits

Remember: if you suspect pain or illness, the visit happens even when it is hard. This page makes it easier, it never replaces the doctor.

Environment Checklist

Quick audit: look around you before you react

Date: _____

Space: _____

Time: _____

SOUNDS

Action: _____



- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Background noise - radio, TV, speech, traffic? | ☐ Sudden sounds - doorbell, phone, alarms? |
| ☐ Devices - AC, fridge, fluorescent lights? | ☐ Does the space echo? |

LIGHTS

Action: _____



- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Fluorescent lighting - flickering? | ☐ Too bright or too dim? |
| ☐ Direct sunlight in eyes? | ☐ Screen reflections? |

SMELLS

Action: _____



- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Cleaning products, disinfectants? | ☐ Food smells - kitchen, lunch boxes? |
| ☐ Perfumes, deodorants? | ☐ Mold or moisture smell? |

PEOPLE & SPACE

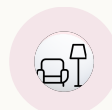
Action: _____



- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ How many people in the room? | ☐ Crowded or spacious? |
| ☐ Is there a retreat option? | ☐ New people - substitute, visitor? |

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Action: _____



- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Temperature - too hot or cold? | ☐ Ventilation - stuffy air? |
| ☐ Seating comfort? | ☐ Clothing - materials, tightness? |

ROUTINE & ANTICIPATION

Action: _____



- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Is the daily schedule visible? | ☐ Were transitions warned in advance? |
| ☐ Anything unusual today? | ☐ Communication tools available? |