

# Preventing germ spread at the doctor's office



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BYOT

Pediatricians are notorious germaphobes. When I sat down for lunch with a pediatrician whom I hadn't seen for years, we greeted each other by simultaneously offering each other hand sanitizer. The last thing we pediatricians want is for your child to pick up a new germ in our office. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated guidelines on how to prevent spread of germs in doctors' offices. You are welcome to read the long, unabridged version [here](#). What follows are the highlights about waiting rooms:

**On our end:**

-Waiting rooms should be equipped with **hand sanitizer or sinks and ideally with masks.**

-Pediatricians should **post visual reminders to cover your/your child's nose and mouth with elbows** rather than hands when coughing and sneezing.

-Pediatricians should also **post visual reminders to dispose of used tissues** properly and promptly.

-All office staff members should **receive the flu vaccine every year and be up to date with all vaccines.**

**On your end:**



BYOB

**Try to BYOT (Bring Your Own Toys).** Our staff cannot possibly clean all toys after each use. Also impractical is to have any plush, difficult-to-clean toys for kids in waiting rooms. It

is much less germy for kids to play with their own toys and read their own books brought from home while in the waiting room. Pictured here is a photo of blocks which we dissuaded a kind mom from donating to the office. For this family, BYOB has a new meaning– bring your own blocks to the pediatrician's office and then back home.

These recommendations can easily apply to ANYWHERE you have to wait with your children- the car inspection wait room, the bank, a restaurant, and the gym.

Notably absent from the recommendations is any suggestion of having separate sick and well waiting areas. You may find this surprising. But, as the policy states: “ Infected children who are symptomatic should be segregated from well children as quickly as possible. However, no research documents the need for or benefit of separate waiting areas for well and ill children.”

In other words, thankfully, your pediatrician's office does not need to build a wall in the waiting room.

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