

How to Advocate for Accommodations in Healthcare Settings

A Guide for Family and Caregivers



Your Rights Under the ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees the right to reasonable accommodations in healthcare settings. These changes help Autistic individuals access care comfortably.

Common Accommodations to Request

- **Sensory-Friendly Adjustments**
 - Dim lights, reduced noise, or quiet waiting areas.
 - Avoid strong scents (perfumes, cleaning products).
 - Cover or remove crinkly exam table paper.
- **Time & Predictability**
 - Longer appointments for processing and questions.
 - Clear schedules and advance notice of changes.
- **Communication Supports**
 - Use plain language, visuals, or AAC devices.
 - Allow extra time for responses.
 - Let the individual bring a support person if needed.



Before the Visit: Preparation Tips

- **Create an “All About Me” Document**
 - Include preferences (name/pronouns), sensory needs, and calming strategies. Share with providers ahead of time.
- **Request Details in Advance**
 - Ask for forms and step-by-step visit plans (ex., check-in process, procedures).
- **Use Visual Supports**
 - Social stories or schedules to explain the visit.
- **Pack Comfort Items**
 - Noise-canceling headphones, fidgets, or snacks.



During the Visit: Advocacy Strategies

- Remind staff of agreed-upon accommodations.
- Prioritize the Autistic person's voice:
 - Providers should address them directly and allow time to respond.
- Check comfort levels:
 - Offer breaks or adjustments if overwhelmed.



After the Visit

- Request a Plain-Language Summary
 - Ask the provider for a written explanation of what happened during the visit, any follow-up steps, and how to get in touch with questions.
- Talk About the Visit
 - Review what went well and what could be improved next time. Use this feedback to adjust future visits and update the “All About Me” document.



Additional Support

Every person's needs are different. The most important thing is to follow the Autistic person's lead, include them in planning, and never assume what they want or need without asking. Respect their privacy, and make sure they are comfortable with you attending or participating in their appointment. If they prefer you to stay in the waiting room or step out for part of the visit, honor that choice.