

Pre-Reading Discussion: Why might someone (including you or your family members) go to a health professional when they **aren't sick**?

This passage is about a mother named Olivia, who is very good about taking her son to the doctor for his regular well-child visits.

Olivia and her son Carlos were at the medical clinic. It was the week of Carlos' birthday. He had just turned three. It was time for his regular checkup.

Olivia liked the nurses and doctors at the clinic. They always smiled when they saw Carlos. "Look at you!" they said to him. "What a big boy you are now!"

The staff at the clinic knew Carlos well. Olivia had been taking him there for his well-child visits since he was born.

Dr. Perez always checked Carlos' weight and height. He checked his eyes and ears. He asked if Carlos was eating and sleeping well. He asked questions about Carlos' speech. He even wanted to know how well Carlos played with other kids.

Olivia liked to talk about her boy with the doctor. He gave her good advice. It made her feel good.

On this checkup, Dr. Perez gave Carlos another shot. The needle always made Carlos scream and cry! Olivia gave him his teddy bear to hug. The vaccines would keep Carlos from getting sick. They would

prevent him from getting a bad virus like polio or chicken pox.

Olivia had a special card to record each one of Carlos' vaccines. He still had a few more to get before he started school.

“Carlos is very healthy,” said Dr. Perez. “You can bring him back to see me again in one year.”

“I will,” said Olivia. She was happy to hear it.

“Tell me,” said Dr. Perez, “how are *you* Olivia? Since Carlos was born, have you had a checkup?”

Olivia looked at the floor.

“You are a great mom, Olivia,” said Dr. Perez. “But don't forget you need to take care of yourself too! On your way out, why don't you set up a visit with Dr. Willis here at the clinic? If you are due for a Pap test, a tetanus shot, or anything else, she will take care of that. What do you say?”

“O.K.,” said Olivia. “I will do that. If Carlos can handle it, I guess I can too.”

“Sure,” said Dr. Perez, “and I bet Carlos will even loan you his teddy bear.”

Questions for Discussion:

Can you relate to Olivia's experience?

What things might prevent a mother or father from taking their children for well-child checkups?

Do/did/will you take your children for regular well-child checkups? Do you think vaccinations (also known as "immunizations") are important?

Why do adults tend to avoid regular preventive checkups, i.e. going to the doctor when they are not sick?