

About.com Special Needs Children

Five Things to Do When the Doctor Says "Wait and See"

By [Terri Mauro](#), About.com Guide

So you're worried about your child, and you've brought your concerns to your pediatrician, and your pediatrician has uttered the three least satisfying words in the English language: "Wait and See."

Welcome to Worry Limbo! For three or six or eight months, you will be neither relieved of your anxiety, nor empowered to do anything about it. If you're more proactive than passive, give yourself the go-ahead to try these five calls to action. No waiting required!

1. Ask why.

What specifically will the doctor be expecting to happen or not happen over the course of the waiting period? Is there something in particular that you should be looking to "see"? What would be the downside of moving forward now instead of waiting? What is the significance of the amount of time that has been chosen for waiting? Can you check in sooner than that if your concerns increase? Make your doctor work for that co-pay!

2. Request constructive suggestions.

Your doctor may consider it a comfort to you to delay a diagnosis and treatment, but he may really be dooming you to endless months of worry, with no positive action to offset your negative fears. Is there something the doctor can suggest that you *do* in the interim? Some exercises or activities? Some at-home therapies? Maybe just some good books to read? Recommended topics to research? Keeping busy helps.

3. Seek personal connections.

Ask if the doctor has worked with other families in similar situations, and see if you can be put in touch with them. Talking to moms and dads who have lived with the doubt and uncertainty, the "wait and see," and emerged happy that they did so may speak to you more effectively than a medical professional who's prescribed it but not lived it. Doctor won't play matchmaker? Do it yourself by seeking out a [support group](#)¹ in your community or online.

4. Pay attention to your child.

Take this as a period in which to really enjoy and get to know the little one in question. Spend as much time together as possible, following your child's lead and observing strengths and weaknesses. Putting yourself on your child's wavelength may make you realize that things aren't as bad as you feared. Or it may make you certain that things are that bad and getting worse. If that's the case, and your pediatrician still advises idleness, it may be time to ...

5. Get another opinion.

Sometimes, "wait and see" is just doctor code for, "You are a hysterical parent who needs to be handled." If after consideration you feel this is the case with you and your doctor, honestly, just find another pediatrician. It's not that every doctor you see has to agree with you or else. Surely, you want someone who is more of an expert on children's health and development than you could hope to be. But every doctor you see *does* need to respect you as an expert on your child. Find someone who can do that now, before you get into the thick of dealing with special needs.

This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit:

<http://specialchildren.about.com/od/gettingadiagnosis/tp/waitandsee.htm>

©2010 About.com, Inc., a part of [The New York Times Company](#). All rights reserved.

Links in this article:

1. <http://specialchildren.about.com/od/respite/a/support.htm>

