



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Top Tips for Hair Cutting

Sensory Processing

Issued by the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Department

Visiting the hairdressers can be demanding for a child who struggles to process sensory information. There are often loud noises, lots of smells, unavoidable physical contact, new faces, and having to sit still for a period of time.

Please see below some strategies to make the experience less stressful:

Before the haircut

- Try to keep a consistent haircutting schedule, for example, on the same day. If possible, try to have the same professional each time.
- Try to familiarise your child with the environment first and watch someone they know get a haircut before they get a haircut.
- Massage the child's scalp regularly to help reduce scalp sensitivity or encourage them to rub their own hair dry with a towel.
- On the way to the appointment try wearing a weighted backpack to provide a calming and regulating influence.
- Make appointments at the beginning or end of the day when the environment is calmer.
- Consider washing their hair at home before the appointment to reduce appointment time and avoid unfamiliar scents.
- Ensure your child knows how long the hair cut will take. Consider bringing a visual timer to the appointment.

During the haircut:

- Always touch on the child's terms. Firm touch is often preferred and should be used first to prepare for lighter touch.
- Minimise the use of clippers or avoid them all together.
- Try dimming the lights and minimise noise if your child can become easily overwhelmed. For older children consider trying noise cancelling earbuds.
- Encourage sitting in front of a mirror so they can see what is happening.
- Talk to your child throughout and describe what is happening and what will happen next.
- Consider bringing fidget toys or stuffed animals to help the child feel comfortable and occupied.
- Consider using a weighted lap pad for the child to use during the haircut.
- Allow movement breaks as and when required.
- When finished agree to do something enjoyable.

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

You may be able to claim a refund of some travel costs under this scheme. For more information visit the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcosts/pages/travelcosts.aspx

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, easy read, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.



British Sign Language users can use InterpretersLive! a service provided by Sign Solutions. This helps Deaf people to access BSL interpreters, and other communication professionals at any time. More information can be found on our website or by scanning

the QR code to the left.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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