Hospital Stays

Your child's hospital care

If your child ever needs to stay in the hospital, learning your way around can be a challenge. Your child's hospital team may include many health care providers – doctors, nurses, therapists, and others. At a teaching hospital, medical students and other providers in training may be involved too.

Understanding "who's who" in the hospital means learning some new names and terms. For example, you may be dealing with:

- **An attending physician**
- **A medical resident**
- **A medical fellow**
- **A medical student**

You may also see:

- **Nurses**
- **Social workers**
- **Occupational therapists (OTs)**
- **Physical therapists (PTs)**
- **Child life specialists**
- **Phlebotomists**
- **Respiratory therapists**

And all of these people may be called "doctors."

Tips on supporting your child during a hospital stay

- **Write down names and roles of doctors and the medical team, or ask for business cards. Hospitals stays are very anxious times and it's hard to remember everyone.**

- **Prepare your child ahead of time. As much as you can, explain to your child what will happen in the hospital. You may want to use an age-appropriate book or video. (Ask someone at your local library or the hospital family resource center for ideas.) Depending on your child's care and needs, you may also want to ask one of your child's providers to use a doll to act out tests or procedures before the real thing.**

- **Know your rights. Hospital regulations allow you to stay in your child's room overnight and during tests or procedures.**

- **Tell the hospital team about your child's favorite foods, enjoyed activities, toileting, and sleeping habits. Bring a copy of the *All About Me* form from Chapter 1 to give to the team.**

- **Bring your child's familiar objects and reminders of home (such as toys, pictures, music, books, and pajamas).**

- **Ask to have non-routine procedures that might be painful or uncomfortable done in a treatment room, rather than in your child's room. This way your child can feel better about his or her hospital room.**

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• Think about how to schedule visits from relatives and friends so your child receives important emotional support but does not get too tired.

• Bring directions to the hospital as a resource and to organize information and paper/reports given to you during the hospital stay.

Sources to Help during a hospital stay

The hospital may have resources to help you and your family. Ask the hospital staff about:

- **Family resource centers and libraries**
- **Interpreter services**
- **Support groups and counseling**
- **Activities and care for siblings**
- **Educational tutoring**
- **Religious services and counseling**
- **Meal tickets**
- **Parking vouchers**
- **Check cashing and ATMs**
- **Laundry and cooking facilities**
- **Lodging or short-term housing for parents**
- **Blood donation**