

Medical Play Kit Information for Parents

We have provided this medical play kit so you can help your child learn more about hospitals before coming to Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. Learning about the hospital can help reduce your child's fear of going to the hospital. The kit contains some of the things your child might use and see in the hospital. We've also enclosed a list of books that may be available at the local library.

If adults worry about surgical procedures, just think how children must feel. Assure your child from the beginning that they will not face the hospital experiences alone and that they will be coming home from the hospital. You, as well as the hospital staff, will be there to help. You know your child best of all. Use that knowledge as you encourage them to tell you about their fears and feelings.

- **Toddlers and preschoolers** cope best when they are told about the hospital stay one to three days ahead of time. They may not remember information given to them far ahead of the event. Children of this age worry that they'll be alone, that they won't come home again, and that they are being punished. ("I did something bad, that's why I'm in the hospital.") Reassure them that they aren't being punished.
- **School-age children** need to know at least a week ahead of time. This gives them time to think about the information and ask questions. School-age children often fear having anesthesia and need reassurance that they will wake up after surgery.
- **Adolescents** should be informed as soon as possible. This age group copes best when given the opportunity to plan for, and make decisions about the hospital stay. They also need reassurance that they will have as much privacy as possible, such as having curtains pulled around their bed and being given choices.

When children have an accurate understanding of what to expect, they are less anxious, they are more willing to cooperate, and they have less difficulty at home before and after hospitalization. If you have more specific questions regarding preparing your child for coming to the hospital, please call the Child Life staff at 651-229-3855.

The Medical Play Kit

The following is a list of items in this kit and information about the items. If you have any questions about the items in this kit or about preparing your child for surgery, please call the child life staff at 651-229-3855.

Hospital coloring book: This provides basic information about hospitals for your child.

Picture of a hospital room: Your child will stay in a room similar to this one.

Diagram of the body: You can ask your child where on their body they think they are having surgery and why. This is a good way to find out what they know about their upcoming hospitalization.

I.D. bracelet: Your child's name will be on this for identification during their stay. It will be placed on either their wrist or ankle.

Surgical cap and mask: These are usually blue in color, and used by people who work in surgery to keep the

surgery free of their germs.

EKG pad: Your child will have at least three of these on (two on their chest and one on their abdomen) to keep track of their heart rate.

Gauze pad: Can be used to dry an area of the skin, or it is used like a Band-Aid. A regular Band-Aid is also included.

Alcohol pad: Used to clean an area of the skin. The smell of alcohol is common in the hospital.

Rubber gloves: Used by many people in the hospital to keep things clean and germ-free.

Your child may enjoy using these items on themselves or on a doll or stuffed animal as they pretend to be a doctor or nurse.

For more information, visit www.gillettechildrens.org and click Patient Preparation & Support.

Book List

Reading together is a great way for you and your child to learn more about the hospital stay. For ideas, talk to your local librarian and use the following reading list:

Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Hautzig, D. and M. A Visit to the Sesame Street Hospital. Random House, 1985.
- Rogers, F. Going to the Hospital. Putnam, 1988.

School-Age Children

- Banks, A. Hospital Journey, A Kid's Guide to a Strange Place. Puffin Books, 1989.
- Hogan, P. and K. The Hospital Scares Me. Raintree Publications, 1980.
- Howe, J. The Hospital Book. Beech Tree, 1994.
- Reit, S. Jenny's in the Hospital. Golden Book, 1984.

Adolescents

- Richter, E. The Teenage Hospital Experience.
- Coward, M. and G. You Can Handle It. 1982.

Siblings' Reactions to Hospitalization

Siblings need to be prepared for their brother's or sister's hospitalization, as well. Sharing with siblings that they too will be cared for, telling them who they will be staying with, and letting them know what they should expect when coming to the hospital to visit their brother or sister will help siblings cope. The child life staff is also available to assist siblings in coping with their brother or sister's hospitalization. Call 651-229-3855 for further information.

- Peterkin, A. What about Me? When Brothers and Sisters Get Sick. Magination Press, 1992.

[Make An Appointment](#) [651-290-8707](#)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).