

# All About Your Rhizotomy Stay



Elijah



Kathryn

Follow along with Elijah and Kathryn  
during their stay at Gillette.

**Thanks to Kathryn and  
Elijah for showing us  
around the Inpatient  
Rehabilitation Unit,  
where they stayed after  
having selective dorsal  
rhizotomy surgery.**

### **A Note to Parents**

Your child is scheduled for selective dorsal rhizotomy surgery at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. Following surgery, your child will have physical, occupational and perhaps speech therapy in our Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit. Therapy will help your child improve mobility (crawling and walking skills) and self-care abilities.

Because children sometimes feel anxious about being in the hospital, we designed this picture book to help them understand the hospital stay. When children know what to expect, they feel more secure and are more willing to participate actively in therapy.

We'll schedule your child for a hospital tour the day of the preoperative appointments. If you would like a tour before then, call Patient Appointment Services at 651-290-8707. From outside the Twin Cities, call toll-free at 800-719-4040. To speak with a child life specialist about preparing your child for surgery or a hospital stay, contact Child and Family Services at 651-229-3855. If you have additional questions, call Sue Murr, manager, Cerebral Palsy Program, at 651-290-8712.

# Welcome to Gillette!

Hi, my name is Kathryn.  
These are my nurses.  
Elijah and I are going  
to show you around.



You are going to have rhizotomy surgery on your back. The surgery will help make the muscles in your legs less stiff. After surgery, you'll stay at Gillette while you heal and do exercises to make your body stronger. These exercises are called occupational and physical therapy.

While you're here, we'll take good care of you.

## Make Yourself at Home



I can watch TV from my bed.

You'll be staying in the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit following your rhizotomy surgery. While you're here, you'll meet other kids who will be doing exercises to get stronger. Some of the kids have also had surgery.

I brought my favorite teddy bear from home to keep me company.



You might share your room, but you'll have your own bed and TV. You'll also have a table with drawers, where you can keep special things from home. You can decorate your room with pictures, or bring a favorite pillow or blanket. Be sure to bring comfortable clothes to wear. One of your parents can stay overnight with you in your room.

## Getting Stronger

After surgery, you'll have to stay in bed for three days so your back can heal. You can roll to one side or lie on your back but the bed has to stay flat. You'll also need to wear knee immobilizers to help stretch your legs. Knee immobilizers are like braces made of soft canvas. They don't hurt. While you're in bed, you can talk with your family, watch movies, read, play games, listen to music or do art projects.



The nurses  
come see  
me a lot and  
sometimes  
we look  
at books.



Our nurses will help make your stay here more comfortable. A nurse will check your temperature and blood pressure every day. Nurses give you medicine, if you need it. They'll take good care of you during the day and at night.



Dr. Gormley came to look at the place on my back where I had surgery.

Dr. Gormley is fun. I tease him and we both laugh.



While you're here, our rehabilitation doctors will talk with you about how you can help your body heal. Your doctor will check your muscles to see how stiff and strong they are. They'll also ask you if you're having pain and order different medications if you need them. In addition, your surgeon might stop by to see how you're doing.

When the doctors said I could get out of bed, I rode to therapy and to the playroom on a bed with wheels. The bed is called a prone cart.



After three days, you'll ride on a prone cart. It's important to spend time on your stomach to keep your hips stretched.

In a week or two, when your muscles get stronger, you'll begin to use a wheelchair or maybe a stander.



I like moving around in the stander. I can visit the nurses.

I use a wheelchair to go to therapy.



## Busy Days

Once you begin therapy, you'll be busy all day. Our occupational therapists will help you use the small muscles in your arms and hands.

Your therapist will help you do things to get ready for the day, such as dressing yourself, combing your hair, putting on your shoes and socks, and brushing your teeth. Your therapist might work with you on writing and computer skills. Our physical and occupational therapists work together with you on rolling, crawling and sitting.





When I was in physical therapy, Kath helped me practice walking.

Our physical therapists will help you work on the big muscles in your arms and legs, so you can balance and move more easily. Physical therapists will help you practice rolling, crawling, sitting and maybe walking. You'll have physical therapy in the gym. After your incision heals, you might do exercises in a pool.



I got to ride a special bike in the halls!

Our therapeutic recreation specialists will play games and do exercises that help you to think. When you play board games, you'll follow directions and take your turn. These are things that help you when you play with your friends.

*It's fun to play with Tammy. Sometimes we draw and sometimes we play with clay.*



Recreation specialists will talk with you about sports, such as adaptive soccer and basketball, and suggest ways to be active when you go home.

If you have speech therapy with a therapist in your hometown or at your school, you can work with our therapists while you're in the hospital. Therapy after surgery is hard work. It also can be fun.



*Sometimes when I need to talk to someone, I go see Erin.*

You even can go to school while you're in the hospital. A teacher at Gillette will help you with your schoolwork. You might have classes with one or two other students, or it might just be you and the teacher.

*School at Gillette is fun.  
My teacher and I like to  
make music together.*

If you feel confused, worried or maybe a little homesick, you can spend time talking with one of our psychologists about your feelings. You might play games, read and do art projects. The psychologists also will talk with your teachers at school.



## Fun and Games

Our child life specialists will answer your questions and help you understand what's happening during your hospital stay. Child life specialists also provide fun things for you to do while you're in the hospital.

*Rylee and I play cards.  
Rylee is staying at Gillette, too.*



*My friends and my cousin came to visit,  
and we played with Play-Doh.*

When you're not in therapy or school, you can spend time in the playroom. We have a computer with Internet access for you to use. You also can play games, do art projects or talk with other kids. Your family and friends can visit you while you're at Gillette. If you live a long way away, you can call your friends, e-mail them or write letters.



One night I went to a dog show at Gillette.  
It was fun to pat the dogs.

Rylee is my roommate, but now  
we are best friends, too!



In the evenings and on weekends, we provide activities for kids who are in the hospital. Your family can take part, too. You might attend birthday parties, do crafts or play games. Sometimes we have special visitors, such as trained dogs, musicians and theater groups. You might make friends with the other kids.

## Goodbye!

Your doctors and therapists will talk to your parents or caregiver. Together they'll decide when you can leave the hospital.

You might come back to Gillette for therapy, or you might see a therapist close to your home. For a while, you won't be allowed to walk except when you're in therapy. At home and school, you'll need to use a wheelchair. You'll also continue wearing your knee immobilizers during the day and at night to help keep your legs from getting stiff. Your therapist will let you know when you can begin walking at home.

Your doctor will ask you to come back to Gillette for check-ups. When you do, you can visit the Gillette friends who took care of you on the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit.



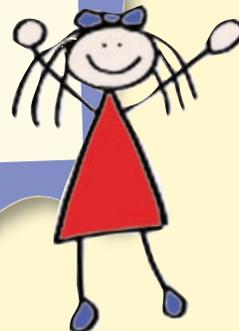
Before I went home, I said goodbye to the nurses. They took good care of me.



## My Checklist of Things to Bring With Me!

My Favorite:

- Stuffed Animal \_\_\_\_\_
- Books \_\_\_\_\_
- CDs \_\_\_\_\_
- Game \_\_\_\_\_
- Blanket \_\_\_\_\_
- Photos \_\_\_\_\_
- This book!



We hope you'll bring this book with you when you come to Gillette.

You also can bring your favorite stuffed animal and blanket and the books you like to read, the CDs you listen to and the videos you watch. Here's a checklist to help you remember to bring some of your favorite things.

On the following pages you can put some pictures of your family and your pets to show to your nurses, doctors, and the other kids who are in the hospital.



# My Photo Album!

You can put some pictures of your family and your pets here. Then show them to your nurses, doctors and the other kids who are in the hospital with you.



More of My Photos!



### Our Mission

Gillette provides specialized health care for people who have short-term or long-term disabilities that began during childhood. We help children, adults and their families improve their health, achieve greater well-being and enjoy life.

## About the Quilt



A Gillette volunteer made the quilt featured on the cover of this book. Each year, our volunteers donate hundreds of quilts to our patients.



**Gillette Children's**  
*Specialty Healthcare*

St. Paul (Main) Campus  
200 University Ave. E.  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-291-2848  
800-719-4040 (toll-free)

Burnsville Clinic  
305 E. Nicollet Blvd.  
Burnsville, MN 55337  
952-223-3400  
866-881-7386 (toll-free)

Duluth Clinic  
Lakewalk Center  
1420 London Rd.  
Duluth, MN 55805  
218-728-6160  
800-903-7111 (toll-free)

Maple Grove Clinic  
9550 Upland Ln. N.  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
763-496-6000  
888-218-0642 (toll-free)

Minnetonka Clinic  
6060 Clearwater Dr.  
Minnetonka, MN 55343  
952-936-0977  
800-277-1250 (toll-free)

Willmar Clinic  
Lakeland Health Center  
502 2nd St. S.W.  
Willmar, MN 56201  
651-634-1938  
800-578-4266 (toll-free)

Mobile Outreach Clinic  
For locations and schedules:  
651-634-1938  
800-578-4266 (toll-free)  
[www.gillettechildrens.org](http://www.gillettechildrens.org)



**Gillette Lifetime**  
*Specialty Healthcare*

St. Paul – Phalen Clinic  
435 Phalen Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55130  
651-636-9443  
800-578-4266 (toll-free)

[www.gillettechildrens.org](http://www.gillettechildrens.org)