

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Helping Your Child in the Hospital Cope with Visitor Restrictions

Visitor restrictions in the hospital are in place to help keep your child safe and healthy. They also help lower the risk of spreading germs between patients, visitors, and staff members. However, we know that being away from your child when they are in the hospital can be stressful for both you and your child. We also know it can be very hard on your child being separated from brothers and sisters. There are several ways that we can help you and your child cope with visitor restrictions while your child is in the hospital.



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Ask your child's nurse or doctor for the current visitor restrictions at Phoenix Children's. This information can change often and we want you to know what the current visitor restrictions are so you can plan ahead.

Take care of yourself:

By taking good care of yourself while your child is in the hospital, it can help lower your stress level. Children often take cues from their parents and loved ones. If you can stay calm and keep a positive attitude during your child's hospital stay, this can help your child cope better. This includes:

- Eating healthy meals and staying hydrated.
- Getting enough rest.
- Taking breaks.
- Exercising: If possible, try to go for a walk outside. The fresh air and exercise can really help your mood.

Ways to help your child cope when you are away from the hospital:

For some children, it may be very hard for them to be alone if you are not able to stay at the bedside with them. There are several ways to help your child cope when you are away from them:

- Plan ahead. Let your child know when you will be leaving and when you think you will be back to the hospital. Talk to your child about being alone while you are away from the hospital. Be open and honest with your child and ask your child to talk with you about his or her feelings about this. Prepare your child for being alone by starting a 3 - 5 minute countdown before you leave.
- Talk with your child's nurse each day if you need to leave the hospital. Set up a plan with them so they know when you are leaving and when you are planning on coming back.
- Ask to speak with a child life specialist. Child life specialists are trained in how to help children and families with their child's illness and their hospital stay. They offer support in ways children and families can understand.
- Set up a phone call through your personal device so you can talk to your child during the time they are alone. You can also use the "JusTalk Kids" app on the bedside iPad® in your child's hospital room. During this call, you can tell your child a story or talk about a special family memory.
- Write a note or draw a picture on the dry erase board for your child before you leave your child's hospital room.
- If you are switching places and another caregiver will be at the bedside, an object called a **transition item** may be helpful during this transition. A transition item may be a sticker or a small felt object you take out of the room to give to the second caregiver. When the second caregiver returns with the transition item, this lets your child know both caregivers were thinking about him or her during the switch. This also gives your child something to look forward to when the second caregiver arrives to the hospital room with the transition item. If you and your child would like to use a transition item, talk with your child's nurse or child life specialist at least 2 hours before you plan to switch caregivers.



An object called a transition item may be helpful when you and a second caregiver switch places.

Help your children stay connected with each other:

When siblings are not able to visit the hospital, it can be very hard on everyone. You can help them remain connected with each other in several ways:

- Plan a specific time to make phone calls or video calls for them so they can talk to each other on a regular basis.
- Have siblings write letters, color pictures, or make drawings for their brother or sister who is in the hospital in a journal. Then have your child send something back home with you for their siblings. Give the journal a special name, such as the **Yo-Yo Journal**, and keep sending it back and forth between the siblings.
- Make crafts together: plan an activity that your child in the hospital can do with their siblings at home. Do a video call while they are making their crafts so they can share the experience together.
- Plan a movie day: have your child in the hospital watch the same movie as their siblings at home at the same time. Then after the movie, have them talk together about their favorite parts of the movie. Let each child take a turn picking out a movie to watch together.
- Read stories together: have siblings take turns reading each other stories over the phone or during a video call.



Make crafts together: plan an activity that your child in the hospital can do with their siblings at home. Do a video call so they can share the experience together.

These activities can also be done with other family members and friends to help your child cope with being in the hospital.

Put together a support system while your child is in the hospital:

Having a support system in place while your child is in the hospital can help lower your stress and help you cope.

- Ask trusted family members, friends, co-workers, and religious members to help you run errands, baby-sit your other children, and help take care of household chores.
- Talk about your feelings and worries with someone you trust or a counselor if possible.
- Find a way that works best for you to communicate with loved ones all at once to give updates.

Talk to your child's nurse, doctor, or child life specialist if you or your child are having a hard time coping with visitor restrictions during your child's hospital stay. We are here to support you.

Now that you have read this:

- Tell your child's doctor, nurse, or child life specialist ways to help you and your child cope with visitor restrictions during your child's hospital stay. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child's doctor or
- call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness, visit our library at
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