

Working together to keep your child safe at BC Children's Hospital

As a parent or guardian, you are an important member of your child's health care team. We encourage you to be involved in your child's care and to work with us. Here's how you can help:

1. Share information with us

- ▶ Tell us if your child has any allergies.
- ▶ Tell us about your child's health. Give us the most up-to-date and complete information you can. You are the expert on your child.
- ▶ Provide us with a list of telephone numbers so we can reach you when you are not in the hospital.

2. Ask questions

- ▶ If you don't understand something about your child's care, ask the nurse or doctor to explain.
- ▶ Write down your questions so you don't forget them.
- ▶ Ask the nurse or doctor to explain all of your child's tests and test results so you understand and could explain it to someone else. In fact, the nurse or doctor may ask you to do this to make sure the information she or he gave was clear. It is okay to ask as many questions as you need to.
- ▶ Give your child a chance to ask his or her own questions.
- ▶ Ask a friend or family member to be with you for support and to ask questions, remember answers and speak up for you and your child if you are having trouble communicating.
- ▶ Find out who to call and how to reach them with health questions after you go home.

3. Help stop the spread of germs!

Germs and healthcare-associated infections (infections that patients can get in healthcare settings while receiving treatment for other conditions) can be prevented. Here's how you can help stop the spread of germs!

- ▶ The best way to prevent infection is by cleaning your hands. Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizers should only be used if soap and water is not available since alcohol-based sanitizers do not kill all germs.
- ▶ Always clean your hands before and after touching your child and before and after being in your child's room.

- ▶ If you are sick or not feeling well, talk to your child's healthcare provider about how to safely visit your child.
- ▶ Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue into a garbage can and then clean your hands. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hand.
- ▶ Tell your child's healthcare provider about any new symptoms your child is experiencing, such as diarrhea, fever, or rash as soon as possible.
- ▶ Have your child take antibiotics only if the healthcare provider prescribes them – have your child take the antibiotics exactly as directed.
- ▶ Ask your child's visitors if they have cleaned their hands. If a visitor has a cold or other contagious illness, ask them not to visit the hospital.
- ▶ It's okay to ask nurses, doctors or other health care providers if they have cleaned their hands before and after they care for your child.

4. Medication Safety

- ▶ It is important that the doctor knows what medications your child uses at home in order to safely prescribe in the hospital. You will be asked for detailed information on everything your child is taking. It may be helpful to either bring in all medications or a complete list, including vitamins and over-the-counter medications.
- ▶ Make sure your child has correct identification and allergy bracelets on, so that the nurse can check them before giving medications.
- ▶ Ask the nurse for the names of the medications being given, and what they are used for.
- ▶ It can be helpful to keep a record of your child's treatments, medications, doses, times and side effects.
- ▶ If you notice that a medication looks different from what your child received before, ask the nurse to check the medication and explain why it has changed.
- ▶ If your child has a reaction to any medication given, tell the nurse or doctor right away.
- ▶ Do not give your child any medications, vitamins or remedies while he or she is in the hospital without asking your child's doctor or nurse because it may interact with other medications.

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5. Prevent falls

Falls happen as children grow and explore the world around them. However, certain medications and medical conditions may make your child less steady and increase their risk of falling. Many falls in hospital happen because of the unfamiliar sleeping situation.

- ▶ Keep side rails up and latched whenever your child is in bed, unless you are providing care.
- ▶ Babies under 12 months should not share a bed.
- ▶ Always return your child to their bed to sleep.
- ▶ Stay beside and watch your child when he/she is out of bed.
- ▶ Use the call bell if you need help getting your child out of bed.

6. Fire Safety

- ▶ Fire events in hospitals are uncommon but we treat them very seriously. Our buildings meet the highest requirements for fire protection and our staff are trained to respond quickly.

During your child or youth's stay if you **see** a fire, pull the fire alarm and tell a staff member immediately. Staff will direct you to an area of safety.

- ▶ If you **hear** the fire alarm, remain calm and check your immediate area for signs of smoke/fire. Staff will determine the cause of the alarm and take appropriate action.
- ▶ An intermittent signal means that there is a possible fire emergency. Remain calm. Watch for signs of smoke/fire. Listen for overhead announcements and take direction from staff.
- ▶ A continuous signal means there may be a fire present and there could be a possible evacuation of some areas. Watch for signs of smoke/fire. Take direction from staff, public announcements, or the Fire Department. Do not travel in the building. Do not use elevators.

7. Surgery, Tests and Treatments

- ▶ Check that your child is wearing a correct identification band.
- ▶ Make sure that you, your doctor and surgeon all agree on what the treatment or surgery will be. Ask questions if you don't understand.
- ▶ If your child has an intravenous tube (IV) in the vein, the nurse will be checking it regularly day and night for swelling, pain, redness or leaking. Although this may be inconvenient at times, it is important to avoid problems. Tell the nurse if you see any changes in your child's IV.

8. Learn more about your child's condition

- ▶ Drop in to the Family Support and Resource Centre in the Ambulatory Building for health information and support.
- ▶ Visit www.bcchildrens.ca "Health Topics" section for an extensive list of health pamphlets and Family Support & Resource Centre information.
- ▶ Go to www.aboutkidshealth.ca a trusted online source for child health information.

9. Let us know when there are problems

- ▶ If you have any concerns about your child's care, discuss them with the nurse or doctor right away. We welcome your thoughts about your child's care and will include them in our care plans. You can have a positive impact on patient safety at BC Children's Hospital!
- ▶ Feel free to bring a family member or friend with you to BC Children's to provide support.
- ▶ If you feel that your problem has not been satisfactorily resolved, contact:

Patient Care Quality Office



Toll free number: 1-888-875-3256

Website: www.phsa.ca/PatientCareOffice

Email: pcqo@phsa.ca

Fax: 604-875-3813

Address: First Floor, Room A108, 4500 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3N1

10. When you go home

- ▶ Ask for clearly written instructions on medications to give including what to give, how much and when you give them, what your child can eat and drink, what activities your child can do and when you need to see the doctor, or clinic again. Give your child's doctor a list of all medications and doses your child is taking since being in the hospital.

Remember It's Good to Ask!

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