



# Preparing you and your child for a hospital admission



## Statement of Values

Respect - Caring - Openness - Partnership - Teamwork Fairness & Equality

# Preparing yourself, the parent, for your child's hospital admission.

Your child's hospital admission can affect many aspects of your family life. If you are in employment, you will need to organise time off work. You may experience a wide range of emotions. These emotions can range from worry and fear to relief. By recognising these emotions you will be in a better position to support your child. So it is just as important to prepare yourself as it is to prepare your child.

Children often sense their parents feelings. By recognising your own fears, worries etc it will allow you to be in a better position to support your child during his/her admission to hospital and cope with any stresses that may arise.

Advice before coming into hospital can also be sought from:








- Children in Hospital- Ireland have an advice pack for parents (Tel: 01-8780448 or [www.childreninhospital.ie](http://www.childreninhospital.ie)).
- Check our Hospital Information Centre in Outpatients for additional specific information leaflets, for example "Going to Theatre", "Blood Tests" etc
- Speak to our hospital staff between 14.00-16.00: Day Ward (01) 4142295; Beech Ward (01) 4142160; Oak Ward (01) 4142152; Maple Ward (01) 4142162; Outpatients Dept. (01) 4142663 and Play room (01) 4143836.
- Visit our web site: [www.amnch.ie](http://www.amnch.ie). and click on **Just for kids** section.
- Being in hospital with your child can be very tiring especially if it is for a long duration. Where this is the case organise support so that another caregiver can stay while you take a break. Older children often feel secure enough to allow you to leave the ward but ensure you tell him/her and the ward staff that you are leaving and when you plan to return.
- Hospital wards by their very nature are very warm so bring in light clothing for yourself to wear.
- Take short breaks from the ward or room. Where possible the nursing staff will organise someone to stay with your child (if required) while you take a tea/coffee break. No Hot Drinks are allowed at the bedside for your child's safety.
- Ask staff about the parents coffee room which is open in the evenings. This room is a sanctuary for parents and so no children are allowed in here. However children are allowed in The Oasis coffee shop, which is staffed by volunteers and is located on the ground floor at the main hospital entrance. You may also bring your child to the hospital canteen. Children must be supervised at all times in these areas.

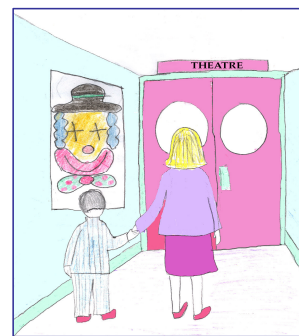


- Bring in something for yourself to pass the time. Time can pass very slowly while you wait for test results.
- Bring in your mobile phone and charger so you can keep in contact with family and friends. Mobile phones however are not allowed in the High Dependency Unit (HDU). Some single rooms have a telephone which will allow incoming calls, the phone number is obtained by prefixing 414 to the phone extension number.
- We pride ourselves on being “family centred” and so extended family are welcome to visit. However as there are sick children in the hospital we ask you to be respectful of their needs by not allowing too many visitors at any one time. Parents and guardians have unrestricted visiting at all times. The Day Ward restricts visitors to parents/guardians and no siblings are allowed (this is due to limited space). Overnight admissions need to ring their relevant ward on the morning of admission to confirm bed is available.
- You can visit the play room with your child (where appropriate) and encourage him/her to make friends with other children.
- If you have other children at home an extended hospital admission can affect them too. They may feel jealous or worry for their brother or sister in hospital. It is important where possible to arrange for them to visit you and their brother/sister. If possible it is a good idea to go home to spend some time with them as well.
- If you and your child’s other parent do not live together then plan in advance who will stay with the child. Organise a workable time table so your child knows what to expect.
- If there are any special arrangements regarding the other parent, for example Barring orders, or you have sole guardianship please inform the staff on admission. The social worker will be notified and will visit you to offer support and advice if required. This will all be done discreetly.
- Depending on the reason for your child’s admission other members of the multi-disciplinary team may be involved in your child’s care, for example Physiotherapist, Speech and Language Therapist and Psychologist.
- If you have any worries or concerns during your visit please speak to a member of the nursing or medical team.

## Preparing your child for a hospital experience

- Hospital admission can be stressful for children of all ages. Preparing your child in advance will help reduce some of the anxiety and allow them to cope better.
- Providing clear, accurate and honest information will help alleviate fears. It is important to get all the information you can about your child’s hospital stay. Having a clear picture yourself will empower you to answer most of your child’s questions. Ask the doctor or nurse what tests and procedures your child will need while in hospital, how long is the expected admission? We have several booklets to help you prepare your child for his/her admission:

-  Ben has to go to hospital to have grommets in his ears
-  Neddy the Nebuliser
-  Harry has to have a scan in hospital
-  Chloe falls and hurts her arm/leg
-  Good-bye tonsils
-  Lulu goes to hospital
-  Hannah’s Mum brings her to the X-ray Department in Hospital

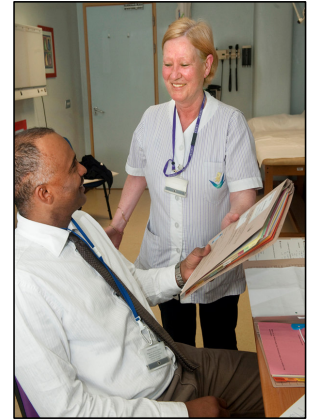
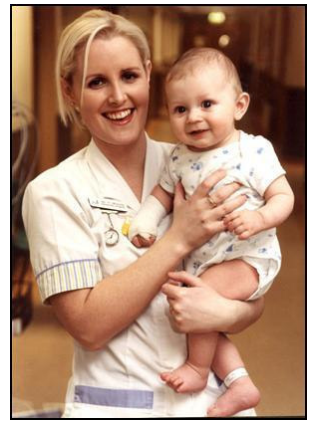




# What should you say to your child?

There is no right or wrong way for children or families to deal with a hospital admission. However, in general the more a child knows in advance the more comfortable he or she will be. No matter what age your child is the following tips may help:

- Choose a quiet time to talk about the upcoming admission or surgery using a calm, relaxed voice.
- Talk about the upcoming hospital admission in a cheerful positive way explaining that doctors and nurses are here to look after him/her.
- Reassure your child that the admission, operation, test or procedure is necessary and the right thing to do. Planned (Non-emergency) admissions can often be very confusing to a child as they feel well and may not understand why this admission is necessary.
- Ask your child what they know about hospital.
- Give your child clear, honest concise information about the hospital admission.



- We can be tempted to sugar coat or avoid some aspects of the hospital admission. For example blood tests or cannulas can be very stressful for the child and parent however they are necessary. It is better to tell your child about the “magic cream and spray to take the pain of the needle away” than ignore this aspect of the hospital admission. However do not dwell on this one aspect either. If your child is excessively preoccupied on “needles” inform the nurses on your arrival and they will organise support and education for your child. (see our leaflet on Children’s Phlebotomy/Blood test Room)
- You may be tempted to tell your child things that are not completely true. If something is going to hurt, say so. Don’t blame the nurse or doctor as this may destroy the relationship which we are trying to develop with your child.





- Try not to make promises you can't keep. For example, don't tell him/her there will be no needles or that he/she will only have to take the medicine once etc.
- Provide praise and support to your child as appropriate.
- Depending on the age of your child rehearse the admission using dolls, drawing, role play or discussion. Playing doctors and nurses can allow your child to express his/her feelings. Always end the play with a happy ending, for example your child going home with his parents/guardian. This is important as it will emphasize to the child that he/she will be returning home following the admission, procedure or test.
- Reading hospital stories will allow your child to familiarise himself/herself with the hospital routine (these may be available in your local library/bookshop or can be purchased from Children in Hospital, Ireland). You can also use the pictures and games at the back of this booklet to assist you in discussing the admission with your child. Explain the admission in exciting terms, an adventure to be taken together like camping.
- Play close attention to your child's feelings and encourage your child to discuss his/her feelings about the upcoming hospital admission.
- Allow your child time to ask questions but don't force him/her as he/she may not be ready. Allow your child time to digest what you have said about the upcoming admission and return to it later.
- Children under 5 years should be told within one to two days prior to admission. Older children require more time to come to terms with the admission, what it means to them, allowing them time to formulate their questions.
- Pack your bags together for the hospital and include things your child wishes to bring with them, for example a favourite toy or pyjamas.
- Involve the whole family in these pre-hospital discussions. Other siblings can be affected also by this admission and by your absence when you are in the hospital with your child.
- Tell your child that family and friends will visit him/her while he/she is in hospital.
- Our hospital provides facilities for you to stay by the bedside. There are parent rooms near the wards for parents with older children.
- Reassure your child that you will be staying with him/her during the whole admission. For longer admissions you should organise support for yourself. Your spouse, partner or a close family member may be able to relieve you so that you can go home for a few hours or indeed overnight. It is important that your child is aware when you are leaving and when you plan to return. Your child will feel happier and safer when they are kept informed and know what is happening.

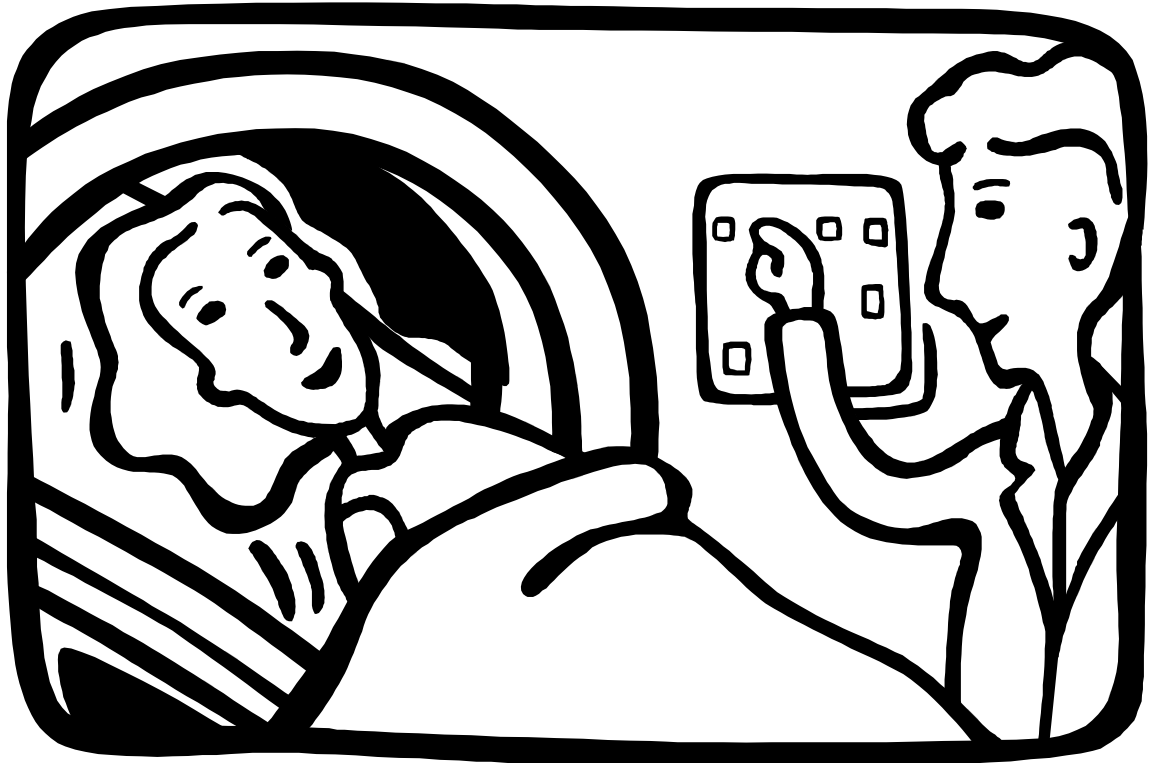
***Always inform the nursing staff when you are leaving the ward.***

# Just for kids

(use in conjunction with our Just for kids website)



Colour me

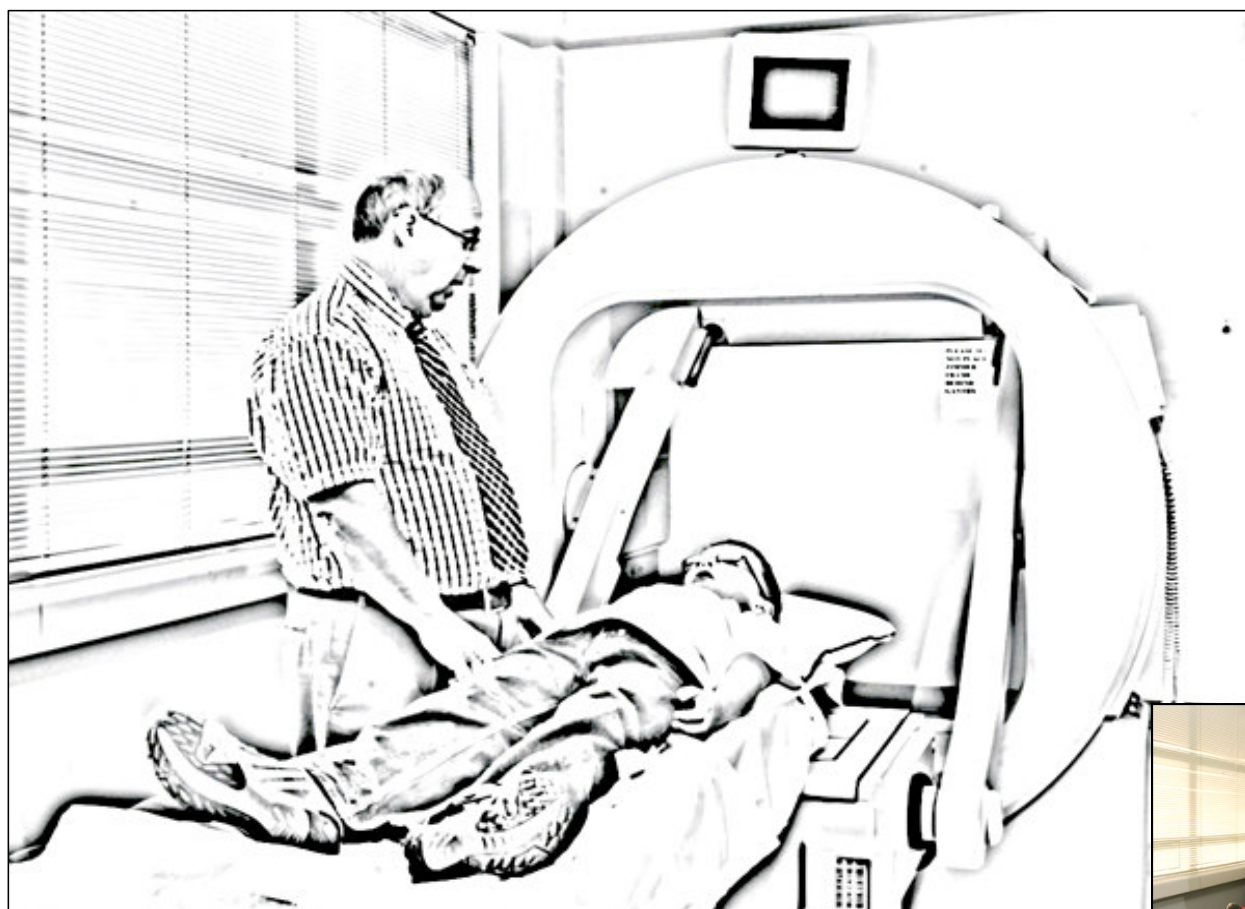




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# Puzzle and Your comments

B	E	E	C	H	C	D	A	
I	Z	A	V	U	N	O	P	XRAY
X	R	A	Y	I	P	K	P	BEECH
H	H	O	E	F	B	G	L	OAK
F	M	A	P	L	E	G	E	MAPLE
S	C	K	Y	M	D	J	Y	NURSE
Q	S	G	H	I	K	L	P	DOCTOR
B	N	Y	T	S	E	T	J	TEST
E	N	U	R	S	E	L	P	WARD
Z	N	T	P	L	A	Y	M	ROOM
X	V	H	S	L	D	T	O	BED
W	A	R	D	K	F	G	O	PLAY
W	Q	D	O	C	T	O	R	APPLE

- We hope you found this booklet helpful. We are constantly trying to improve the service we provide to the child and parents/guardians that attend our hospital. As part of this we would welcome your comments on this booklet. You comments can be posted to:

Eoin Power CNM3, Children's Outpatients, AMNCH, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

or emailed to:

[eoin.power@amnch.ie](mailto:eoin.power@amnch.ie).

or

Telephone Eoin at 01-4143683

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