

---

Children's Service

## A Parents' Guide to the Children's Wards

This leaflet has been written to help your understanding of your child's stay in hospital and answers many commonly asked questions.

It discusses:

- How you should prepare both yourself and your child for their stay. This includes how to talk to your child about their stay and what to bring with you.
- What to expect on arrival at the children's wards
- Staying with your child in hospital and visitors
- Contact details and how to find Addenbrooke's

### Preparing Your Child for Hospital

There are always 101 questions that come to mind when told your child needs to be admitted to hospital. If it is a planned admission some weeks or months in the future, there is a good opportunity to plan and prepare for this with your child. Below we have listed some of the commonly-asked questions, with the hope it may help make the whole experience a little easier for all.

#### Should I tell my child about their planned hospital admission?

Yes, children will often sense that there is something their parents are concerned about. If children feel things are being kept 'secret', they may become fearful of the unknown, and become too frightened to ask. It is important to be honest with your child so they can trust you and feel secure.

#### When is the best time to talk to my child about the planned admission?

Children are often present at the consultation with the doctor, so they may pick up on what is being said. It can be useful to 'check out' what they understand and how they feel about what was said by the doctor. They may have a whole jumble of emotions and may experience feelings from fear to excitement. Explanations should be brief, honest and consistent. If your child asks questions, your answers should be direct and simple. Try not to give too much information at once; this should be based on your child's need for information. Children often need time to process new information gradually.

#### How will I prepare my child for hospital?

- Talk about the admission in a calm, reassuring manner, allowing time to listen to and answer your child's questions and feelings. This should relate to your child's needs, and care should be taken not to 'go on about it'.
- A pre-admission visit to the ward or department may help you and your child to familiarise yourselves with the hospital and give you an opportunity to talk about who you met and what you saw. (Telephone the ward to arrange a visit.)
- Storybooks about hospital and visits to the doctors are available from local libraries and book shops.
- 'Hospital role play' such as acting out with dolls and teddies, hospital play kit, and dressing-up can be useful.

- 
- Drawing or painting a picture of what they might see or do in hospital.
  - Helping to pack their hospital bag.

**When should I begin preparation for hospital admission?**

As a general guide, the younger the child, the closer to the admission date the better, as young children have difficulty in understanding the concept of time.

**What if my child is upset and not wanting to go?**

Gentle reassurance and listening to your child's fears will help. Recognise that this will be a new experience for you all and that it is OK to have all sorts of feelings. Reassure your child that you will be able to stay with them. Talk about whom you will meet and the kinds of play activities they may join in with.

**What should we take with us?**

It will be important to involve your child in choosing what to pack into their hospital bag. Choices may include:

- Cool comfortable day clothes (it can be warm on the wards);
- Night clothes;
- Slippers or comfortable shoes to wear around the wards, preferably with soft soles to reduce the noise at night;
- Toothpaste, toothbrush and other wash things;
- Nappies and special cup/bottle, as needed;
- One or two of their favourite toys, or comforter;
- Books and activities;
- Photos of Family/friends/pets;
- Some school work if term-time;

We have plenty of toys, tapes, videos, games and drawing things.

Remember to bring in:

- Clothes and wash things for yourself;
- Your child's medication;
- Drinks and snacks for yourself;
- Books/magazines to read.

The hospital cannot take responsibility for lost or damaged items. If bringing something special or precious, please name it.

**On admission/arrival to the children's wards**

When you get to hospital you need to find the right ward (ask at reception if you are not sure). You will need to press the security intercom to enter any of the children's wards. Please be patient if we are not able to answer the door immediately.

**Welcome and introduction**

In the ward, someone will show you where your child's bed is, and then they will show you around.

---

A nurse will ask you and your child (depending on their age) lots of questions:

- where they go to school,
- what they like to eat and drink,
- what they like to do during the day,
- when they go to bed
- who will be staying with them.

This helps us to get to know you and your child so that we can follow your child's routine and make your stay in hospital as comfortable as possible.

Each shift your child will be allocated a 'named nurse', who is responsible for your child's care and will answer any questions.

### Facilities

- Each bed space has a 'Patientline' machine which has TV (this is free and goes off at 9pm) radio and a telephone. Phone cards and movie cards can be bought from machines in the concourse.
- On normal school days, for children of school-age, we have teachers who come to the wards.
- Meals are served on the ward to all in-patients, and breast-feeding mothers. A dietitian is available for any special requirements. If your child needs a special diet, it is helpful to let the ward know before admission.

### Observations

- Soon after arrival on the ward, a nurse will want to weigh your child and record their temperature, pulse, breathing and blood pressure.
- The nurses will always explain what they are doing. Please do ask if you are not sure what is happening.

### Investigations

Your child may need other investigations specific to their condition. The doctors and nurses will explain this individually but please ask at any time if you do not understand anything or would like to know more.

**A play specialist or specialist nurse** may be available to help prepare your child for specific procedures. Depending on your child's level of understanding these may include:

- Photo books;
- Adapted dolls and teddies;
- Role playing of procedures;
- Visits to treatment areas.

They may also help your child through relaxation, distraction and play.

For further information contact our Therapeutic Play Manager (extension 6746)

## Staying with your child in hospital

On our children's wards we have a bed next to each child's bed, in which one adult family member can stay.

**Ward C2** (medical) <http://www.addenbrookes.org.uk/serv/wards/wardc2.html>

**Ward C3** (medical and surgical) <http://www.addenbrookes.org.uk/serv/wards/wardc3.html>

**Ward D2** (surgical) <http://www.addenbrookes.org.uk/serv/wards/wardd2.html>

In PICU (paediatric intensive care unit) we do not have space for a parent bed next to the child. Instead, parents (or other close adult family member) can ask to stay in a different room on the Hospital site and we will make every effort to accommodate them. Please speak to a member of staff. You can also see the Acorn House sick children's trust website: <http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/>

It is fine for your child to stay alone if you are unable to stay, but please make sure we have your contact details.

## Take a break

It is important that you have a break and look after yourself and/or other family members. Please tell a member of staff if you are leaving the ward. A member of the play team may be available to look after your child.

Our Child and Family Support Team, and chaplains are available to provide additional emotional and psychological support, as needed.

## Parents' room

Each ward and PICU have a parents' room, where you can have a rest and make snacks or drinks (fridge, freezer, kettle and microwave are available. Please label any food). There is a selection of food outlets and other facilities in the main hospital concourse. Hot drinks are not allowed on the wards for safety reasons. There is a pay phone in the parents' room (mobile phones must not be used in the hospital).

- Addenbrookes is a 'No Smoking' hospital.

## What can I do to stop my child getting an infection in hospital?

We need your help to keep Addenbrookes clean, and to reduce the risk of hospital acquired infection:

- Please let us know if your child has an infection, or has been in contact with an infectious disease.
- Please keep your child's bed space tidy to make cleaning easier.
- Please always wash hands on entering and leaving the ward.

See the hospital infection control website: <http://www.addenbrookes.org.uk/infection/>

## Visitors

Anyone may visit at anytime, but please understand that there is limited space on the wards, and that other patients need to rest.

---

**Contact details**

Addenbrooke's Hospital, Box Number, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

Main Hospital switchboard:	01223 245151	
Ward C2	01223 217231	Box 5
Ward C3	01223 217450	Box 6
Ward D2	01223 217250	Box 15
Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)	01223 217715	Box 7
Clinic 6	01223 216321	Box 45
Paediatric Day Unit (PDU)	01223 257157	Box 51
Children's Observation Unit (COU)	01223 586841	Box 87

**How to find Addenbrooke's**

Parking on site can be difficult and costly, so please consider alternative methods if possible. The ward will have up-to-date information about any car parking concessions.

There are bus services from Cambridge city centre and the train station  
Useful numbers: Cambus – 0870 6082608 WAGN Railway 0845 7818919

Park and Ride buses run to the hospital from Babraham Road and Trumpington sites.  
For more information on getting to Addenbrooke's, see the Addenbrooke's Access website: <http://www.addenbrookes.nhs.uk/directions/about.html>

**More information**

We appreciate that this can be a difficult time for any child, family member or parent. If you have any concerns or need more information please do not hesitate to contact the Ward or Department your child is to be admitted to.

We welcome any thoughts and comments on the treatment and care received during your child's stay with us. Please raise any concerns with your nurse or the Ward Sister. The Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS) is available on site if you would like to make any comments, positive or negative, about your stay.

The following guides are available:

- **Young person guide** aimed at over 11 year olds
- **Child guide** aimed at under 11 year olds

These are available on <http://www.addenbrookes.org.uk/young> or telephone ward for hard copies.

**Other websites:**

Action for Sick Children: <http://www.actionforsickchildren.org>

Connexions: <http://www.connexions.gov.uk>

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request – 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

**Cantonese**

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી બીજી ભાષાઓ, મોટા છાપેલા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિઓ રચનામાં પણ મળી રહેશે.

**Gujarati**

A richiesta questo documento è anche disponibile in altre lingue, a caratteri grandi e in formato audio.

**Italian**

ئەم بەلگەيە ھەر ھەروەھا بە زمانەکانی کە، بە چاپی درشت و بە شریتی تەسجیل دەس دەکەوێت

**Kurdish**

درخواست پریدستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

**Urdu****Document History**

Authors Children's services

Department Children's services, Box 116  
Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road,  
Cambridge, CB2 2QQ  
[www.addenbrookes.org.uk](http://www.addenbrookes.org.uk)

Published August 2005

Review date August 2007

File name Young\_guide.doc (word)

Version 1

number

Ref PIN 712