



Children's National™

Chaplaincy Services

In the Hospital!
– Again!





Sometimes what makes us sick or hurts us, means that we have to go to the hospital for care.

Sometimes we come back to the hospital over and over again.

Even when we know the hospital will take good care of us, or someone we love, it's not at all fun to be staying there.

Having a child hospitalized is always a worry. Even if you have a long-term, really good relationship with the doctors and nurses, and feel that your child's injury or illness is well managed each hospitalization is also new. Some things will be the same; some may have changed. Coming here can give you some confidence that things can get better. But coming here is also a reminder that life is not the way you planned for it to be.

This hospitalization is another interruption in your life. Day-to-day activities that are familiar, that give you a sense of being grounded and connected to others are now up-ended. If your life seems so much about caring for a child that has multiple hospitalizations it can all



feel as if there are never any stable routines – or the routine is the hospital! But you have developed some patterns that help you function with less stress. Those are now irregular.

Maybe part of your stress today is: who is, who can, care for other children at home? Maybe it's more about whether the health insurance will cover these costs. It might be that you feel that you can neither afford to take more time off work – or, stand to leave your child alone.

And, spending days trying to “live” in a hospital can be just plain boring. Same one room, same food, same view. You can end up feeling pretty stuck, anxious, or sad.

Dear God, there are things I understand and things I don't understand. Questions I have and questions I haven't even thought of yet. Sometimes I feel like the best expert

about my child – sometimes I just feel frightened and overwhelmed. I am so grateful for this hospital, these doctors, these nurses. They know us and take good care of my child. I just didn't want to have to come back here! I know You have never promised me quick or easy answers, but I'd like to feel as if life were a little more secure – my child's health a little more sure. I pray that You will be with me, be with us. Walk with us through these days. Help us to see the good things in the midst of the difficult ones. Be with all who wait at home: sometimes it is just as hard to not be her as it is to be here. Amen

What routines have been disrupted not only in your life, but in the life of you child who is the patient? Are there some routines that can even be brought along to the hospital? Stories and bedtime prayers... Special TV programs... Friday night pizza? Being able to reconstruct some special times may help your child get through the stay at the hospital more easily.

Children at home need routine too. Have each one decide on one activity during the week that they want to keep as “usual” as possible – maybe that’s your time to go to the soccer game, or do homework. If you can manage your children will feel less stressed – which usually rubs off on you.

Depending on how sick your child feels, he or she might enjoy a visit from a teacher or classmate freeing you up to check in at home.

Some children can actually become pretty comfortable in the hospital – you might wonder if this is almost “too easy” for them. It might be helpful if they can talk to you about what they feel. Is it a sense of comfort knowing that the people here can take good care of her? Is it a feeling of safety? Does she really like getting the attention? Lots of feelings can be mixed up together – they are not right or wrong – they just are.





**For more information, contact your chaplains
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