



Children's National™

Chaplaincy Services



Your First
Stay in the
Hospital

The last place on earth you want to be is here in the hospital with a child who is sick – or injured.

This was never a part of your plan for being a parent!

Lots of feelings are rolling around in your head and heart right now. You are anxious – that's what moms and dads who love their children feel when they can't make it all better. You're glad there are good doctors and nurses and a special hospital just for children – but you still don't want to be here. Things feel funny, smell funny, sound funny.

You don't want your child to hurt, to suffer; you don't want them to be sick.

Holy One, You are like a mother and father to us... so you know how I feel now. How I worry for my child – how I hope for my child. Be with me to help me feel calm and peace, ease my heart, lift my spirit and my trust. Be

with my child that all things may be well – according to Your great love for us. Keep us, all of us, safe – by Your strength. May the hours pass; may the doctors come with good news; may the nurses care with gentle hands; may I rest – and rest in You.

While you do feel overwhelmed and are less in control of this situation that you would like, there are still ways to be actively involved in the care your child received. Many of our inpatient units encourage parents to participate in the doctors' rounds where you can hear updates and ask questions. If you haven't been informed about whether this is true on your inpatient unit please ask your nurse. You may want to keep a small notebook where you can jot down questions for you child's doctors. Sometimes you are given a lot of information at once, so finding a way to keep track of that information and your questions can help you feel better informed and more capable of understanding what is, and will be, happening.

God of all, through Your wisdom we learn and grow in knowledge and in skill. I am having to learn things I never wanted to know, never believed I would have to know. The words are strange, the ideas are strange and often frightening. I have to trust other people to make decisions for my child, and to care for my child. Help me to be patient, to say what I don't understand and ask for help, help me to advocate for ways in which I can show, and provide care for my child. Help me be able to ask others to slow down, to explain in words I can comprehend. Help me to feel and be strong and to rely on Your strength and love for me. Amen.

This is a large facility and many things are far away from one another. When you are new to this building it is hard to find some places. If someone sees you looking a little lost we hope they will stop and ask if they can help you. But please stop anyone, knock on any door, to get assistance finding your way around.

It's also important that you feel empowered to ask someone to stop what they are doing if something feels uncomfortable to you. Or to ask for attention for you child if anything at all seems out of the ordinary.

STOP: Speak up, Take the Initiative, Open up dialogue and ask questions, Prevent hurt. We are committed to partnering with you in the care of your child – it's more than okay to ask for clarification or call attention to something that feels uncomfortable to you.

There are also many persons here who can help you by supporting you and assisting you with a variety of services besides the physicians and nurses. Social Work and Child Life Specialists can be wonderful resources for you. Chaplains are always available for support, conversation, and sacrament. Concierge services can help you with practicalities. Don't hesitate to ask us for help. We want to make this as easy an experience as possible for your family.



**For more information, contact your chaplains
Children's National Medical Center**

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