



**BON SECOURS
HOSPITAL
GALWAY**

PARENT ADVICE BOOKLET

**How to Cope and Prepare Yourself
if Your Child is going into hospital**



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A visit or stay in hospital can be worrying, especially if you and your child have not been to hospital before. The sights, sounds, smells as well as people in different clothes are unfamiliar. Your child and you will need some preparation for this experience. This leaflet has been provided by the staff of Bon Secours Hospital, Galway to ensure that your child's stay with us is as happy as possible.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR HOSPITAL:

It is possible to reduce the sense of strangeness and fear that your child could experience in the most gentle and natural way by introducing the experience of hospital in your child's normal play, using simple toys, games and books. For instance, play doctors and nurses at home. You will have to help a little unless they have been in hospital before, they cannot imagine it all on their own. Get them to play at being in bed and having breakfast in bed - this helps them realise patients stay in over night. Play at visiting. Play at operations, but don't go into much detail! Explain that operations are to look inside you and see what is wrong so that they can make you better. Always end the hospital play with the patient coming home happily with their parents and family. This is most important as small children often think that they are not coming back home.

WHEN TO PREPARE:

When a planned hospital admission is necessary you must prepare your child for this new experience. Before admission, it may be helpful to visit the hospital so your child knows what to expect. If your child is very young or insecure it would be of great advantage if you could be there for the duration of their hospital stay.

We provide camp bed facilities for you to stay overnight and encourage you to do so. Your child will need you especially before and immediately after the operation. Reassurance and lots of love are often the most important medicine for a child going into hospital.

CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS OLD

Usually three to four days before admission is ample preparation time. Explain to your child that he or she has to go into hospital to get better and will come home again. The younger the child, the more you will have to repeat this to reassure them.

CHILDREN 4-6 YEARS OLD:

Three to seven days before admission is ample time for preparation. This will give your child time to think about it and ask questions. Ask the consultant exactly what treatment will be given so that you have sufficient information to answer questions and explain in simple but honest terms.

CHILDREN 7 YEARS AND OVER:

For children seven and over, frank discussion a few weeks beforehand and participation in the planning is advisable. Get details from the consultant about necessary treatments and how they will be carried out.

A child who is well informed about blood tests, anaesthetics or x-rays, will be more confident and unafraid, than one who is not prepared.

Answer questions truthfully, giving as much information as you think your child will understand. Remember, you can only do this if you have the information yourself.

HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF:

Try to reorganise your normal routine so that you can spend as much time as possible with your child. If necessary organise friends and relatives to look after your other children.

DO'S AND DON'TS:

- **Do** remember to check if your child needs to fast. Fasting means NOTHING (not even water) to drink or eat. Fasting may need to commence at 12 midnight or on the morning of the procedure. It is important that you check this with your child's consultant. Fasting is required before an anaesthetic to avoid a child vomiting and inhaling the vomit. Fasting may also be required before some tests.
- **Do** seek advice from your GP if your child develops a cold, diarrhoea or other illness or is in contact with an infectious disease or infestations (eg. Headlice, scabies) prior to admission.
- **Do** bring medicines that your child takes regularly (eg. for asthma) to ensure their identification and availability if required.
- **Do not** mislead your child. Don't say "there will be no needles", unless you have been told this will be so or "you're only going to have an x-ray", when an operation is planned. Lies hurt and will teach your child not to trust hospital staff.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED IN HOSPITAL:

- **FOR YOUR CHILD:**
Night clothes, washing kit, light day clothes for recovery time, (nappies/wipes,) a favourite blanket or toy (no matter how scruffy), a soother and/or bottle (if used), simple books and games to pass the time.
- **FOR YOURSELF:**
Night clothes, toilet bag, light clothes, something to pass the time. Remember mobile phones are not allowed in many areas of hospitals. Storage space is limited so don't bring too much and don't bring valuables.

WHAT YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO DO IN HOSPITAL?

You will be free to care for your child as you would at home, washing, dressing bringing to and helping them in the toilet, nappy changing, playing with and feeding. Hospital staff will naturally offer any assistance you may require. Support your child during medical examinations and injections, explaining what is going to happen and give comfort.

SHORT BREAKS:

It is important for you to take breaks but always explain to your child that you are going and when you will be back. Your child may cry and cling to you, that is normal, but if you come back when you say you will this will build confidence. Always tell the nurse when you are going so that your child can be reassured and observed until your return.

IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT YOUR CHILD:

Make sure all staff know what your child likes to eat or drink, what he or she dislikes, how he or she asks to go to the toilet, names body parts if he or she has a special name for anything and what is their pet name. Please indicate to staff the name of other carers who will be sharing the care with you. This will allow staff to maintain your child's security in your absence.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

You as a parent have primary responsibility for your child's welfare. It is up to you to ensure that your child is treated with dignity and respect and to protect him or her from invasions to their modest or privacy. You must be an advocate for your child in hospital. Children are unlikely to have the words to explain feelings or fears. Let your child know that you will voice their worries or fears to hospital staff for them.

If you have a concern, do not be afraid to express it. It is better to solve problems at an early stage rather than allow them to grow or go unresolved.

GOING HOME:

Before discharge, make sure you know all about your child's after-care. Write down any instructions about food, ask staff to explain any prescriptions given, etc. If you are not clear about anything - **ask again**. When the doctor tells you to bring the child back to be reviewed, ensure that you take note of the date. It is a good idea to let your GP know when your child is for admission and when discharged.

REMEMBER:

- DO** ask for written instructions if they are not given to you.
- DO** read all the instructions - **TWICE** and follow them all.
- DO** ask about anything you don't understand or feel that you need to know.

AT HOME AGAIN:

When your child gets home from hospital you may experience difficulties at first. Do not expect your child to be back to normal immediately. Some children may feel out of sorts for a while. Your child may have problems at night about going to bed and may want a light on, or their bedroom door open before they can happily go to sleep.

VISITING HOURS:

Visiting hours are flexible and generally you may have visitors any time from 11am until 9pm. For child and parent comfort however we discourage visits during mealtimes.

- We consider it important that children have adequate rest, and where appropriate, your clinical ward manager will discuss this with you and your consultant.
- Children may visit if accompanied by an adult.
- If visitors have a cold or other infection, it may be advisable not to visit to protect your child and other patients from becoming infected.
- On occasion due to widespread infection within the community, it may be necessary to impose visiting restrictions. If this situation arises we request that these guidelines be followed.

MEAL TIMES:

Breakfast:8am - 9:30am

Lunch:12md - 1:30pm

Supper:5pm - 6pm

Beverages are provided mid morning, mid afternoon and in the evening.

Visitors can avail of restaurant services from 10am until 6.30pm. If you have special dietary requirements please advise us in advance, so that your dietary needs may be met.

INPATIENT FACILITIES

- Television: Each room has a television with a variety of channels.
- Telephone: A telephone is provided at the bedside for convenience and all calls are charged to your account.
- Nurse Call System: A nurse call system is installed in each room and can be activated from the bedside or in bathroom areas
- Newspapers and post service: Newspapers and magazines of your choice are supplied on request and charged to your account. Incoming mail will be delivered daily to your room.
- Pastoral Care: A Pastoral Care service is available for all principle denominations. The sacrament of Holy Communion is offered to patients on a daily basis. Mass is celebrated each Sunday at 11am in the hospital Chapel and is transmitted to patient's rooms.

We request your co-operation in vacating your room between 9am and 11am on the day of discharge. This gives us an opportunity to prepare for patients awaiting admission.

If you and your child are being collected after this time, you are welcome to use the facilities of the day lounge.

Please let us have your comments about your stay in Bon Secours Hospital. We wish to provide the best service possible and you can assist us by filling out a patient comment card.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Insured Patients:

Bon Secours Hospital Galway, accepts many insurances which can cover all or most of your hospital account. We offer direct settlement with your insurer in most cases. The main schemes covered are:

Within Ireland:

- Voluntary Health Insurance
- BUPA Ireland
- Vivas
- Garda Medical Aid
- ESB Medical Provident Fund
- Prison Officers

International Schemes:

- Blue Cross / Blue Shield
- BUPA International

Remember to...

- Check the policy cover for the treatment and the accommodation required.
- Confirm with your insurance company if there is any excess on your policy as this excess is payable on admission.
- Bring the Insurance Membership Card on admission.
- You will be asked to complete an insurance form and will need your GP's name and address and the date you first visited your consultant.

Self-Pay Patients (Non-Insured)

Non-insured patients like to know their costs in advance. In a large number of cases, the hospital will be in a position to quote a fixed price for your treatment. This will be based on the information forwarded by the consultant on treatment required, anticipated length of stay, ancillary services, etc.

You will be asked for payment on or before admission.
You may be entitled to tax relief as a self-pay patient.
Our staff will be pleased to provide further details.

Payment can be made in a number of ways including cheque, cash, laser or credit card.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

The following are examples of books which may help you prepare your child for their experience of visiting hospital. Please note that age groups are guidelines only

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Moirá Andrew:	Hairy Man Goes to Hospital	(5-7 Years)
Nicola Smee	Freddie Visits the Doctor	(1-4 Years)
Anne Civardi & Stephen Cartwright	Going to Hospital	(3-8 Years)
June & Garth Adamdon:	Topsy & Tim Meet the Ambulance Crew	(3-7 Years)
	Topsy & Tim go the Doctor	(3-7 Years)
	Topsy & Tim go to Hospital	(3-7 Years)

OLDER CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

Margrit Cruicknshank:	Liza's Lamb
Jean Ure:	Becky Bananas - This is your life
Diana Kimpton:	Hospital High Way Code

How to reach us...

