



Helping Your Child Cope with Isolation in the Hospital

Children's Mercy cares about your child's emotional and physical health.

Sometimes children are put in "isolation" or "contact precautions." This happens when your child has an illness they can give to someone else or when your child needs to be protected from illnesses.

Some kids in isolation might experience feelings of being scared, confused, lonely or even angry.

Tips for helping your child:

- **Tell your child they have not done anything wrong!**
- **Provide information about what isolation means.** Try saying:
 - ◊ "When people come into our room, they will be wearing hospital gowns, gloves and maybe even masks over their mouths that protect them from germs."
- **Explain that wearing these things helps our nurses and doctors stay well and able to take care of you and other children.** Try saying:
 - ◊ "Doctors and nurses wear these a lot when they take care of kids in the hospital."
- **Offer comfort and honesty.** Encourage your child to ask questions.
- **Learn about their thoughts and fears.** Tell your child it is ok to have lots of different feelings.
- **Continue to provide ongoing information.** Remind your child that everyone is here to take care of them.
- **Make sure your child knows that they will get to leave the hospital** once their body is better and the doctor says they can go home.

Tips for helping your child cope with staying in their room:

- **It is still OK to play!** Play helps children learn and grow, even in the hospital.
- **Staff can provide toys, games, and art materials for kids of all ages.** Please ask for what you need.
- **Some kids like to play with pretend medical kits and dolls.** This type of play helps children to express their feelings about the hospital.
- **It is fun to look out the window:** watch the birds fly, watch for airplanes, even imagining themselves being outside sometimes helps. What can you help your child see or imagine?
- **Continue with your normal daily schedule:** keep normal wake, sleep, play and meal times. Think about how to include school work in your child's day.
- **Offering choices helps kids to feel in control.** Offer choices whenever possible for example you could say "Do you want apple or orange juice for breakfast?"
- **Face timing or calling family and friends** is fun and helps provide an "escape" from the hospital room.

Please share any questions or concerns with your nurse or doctor. More resources and information are available to help you and your child, just call ext. 53757.



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