

Stress: A Normal Reaction to Being in the Hospital

- When your child is in the hospital, it's natural to feel stressed. It's helpful to know about the effects of stress, how to manage it, and ways to take care of yourself.
- What does stress look like?
 - **You:** feeling worried, irritable, sad, and "on high alert." You may avoid friends and family.
 - **Child:** difficulty separating from you, clingy, crying a lot, sad/moody/withdrawn, tantrums.
 - **Family & Friends:** may not know how to provide support and/or may avoid visiting.

Taking Care of Yourself and Your Family

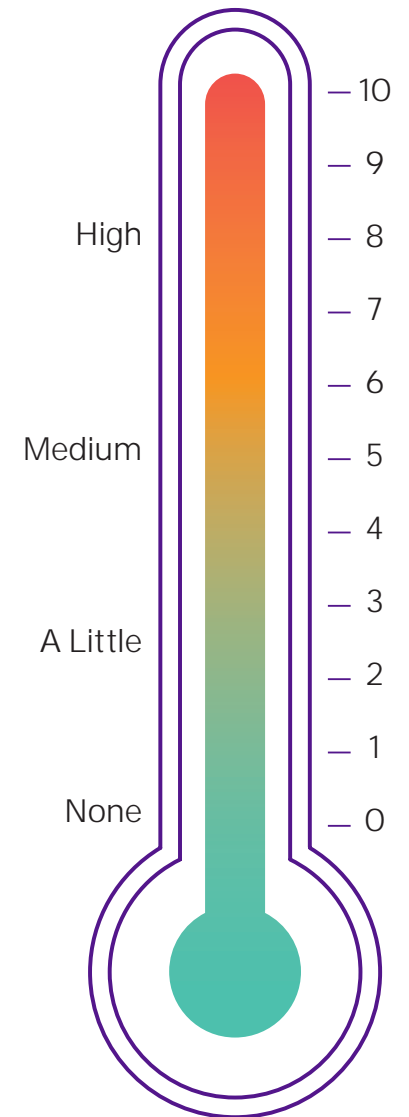
Everyone has different ways of managing stress. Below are a few suggestions, but find what works best for you.

- Connect with our Family Support Services.
- Tell friends and family what you need and how you're feeling. They may not know what it's like, but they can listen.
- Listen to and validate your child's feelings and stress.
- Bring comforting items from home for you and your child.
- Don't forget to eat and drink water and healthy fluids.
- Practice one-minute deep breathing exercises.
- Use earplugs or listen to music to reduce noise.
- Visit the meditation room.
- Take a short walk off the unit.



Family Stress Thermometer

How are you doing?



Common Stressors

When your child needs care in the hospital, you may feel stressed. Below are common stressors that families might have.

Your Child's Hospital Stay:

- Your Child's Comfort and Well-Being
- Your Child's Medical Condition
- Your Child's Medical Care
- Communication with the Team
- Care Coordination
- Shared Room/Needing Privacy
- Language/Cultural Issues

Your Feelings:

- Worry/Anxiety/Fear
- Sadness and Depression
- Loneliness/Isolation
- Anger/Irritability
- Confusion/Uncertainty
- Guilt/Shame
- Hopeless/Helpless
- Spiritual Questions/Concerns

Your Health:

- Pain/Discomfort
- Nausea/Loss of Appetite
- Headaches
- Sleep Problems
- Fatigue

Day to Day Living:

- Insurance and Money Problems
- Work/School
- Child Care
- Transportation
- Housing

Family and Relationships:

- Partner/Spouse
- Children
- Family/Friends
- Need More Support

Discharge Planning/Transition:

- Transfer Between Units
- Transition to Rehab or Nursing Facility
- Discharge/Going Home
- Going Home with Services or Equipment
- Follow-up Appointments

Family Support Services

Our family support services are here for your child and family.

Social Worker

Talks with children and their families about the social, emotional, and financial issues that come up when a family member has a medical condition. Connects children and their families to community resources and assists with discharge planning.

Child Life Specialist and Creative Arts Therapist

Provides emotional support for families. Helps your child cope through play. Offers age-appropriate medical information.

Integrative Health/ Mind Body Bedside Program

Offers holistic care to parents and children free of charge at the bedside. Services include Mindfulness Meditation, Therapeutic Touch, REIKI, M-Technique (gentle hand and foot touch), Yoga, and Massage.

Chaplain

Offers support to people of all spiritual paths and cultural beliefs, helping you and your child explore meaning, hope, and connection.

Psychologist & Psychiatrist

Behavioral health experts who can help your child and family cope with illness, anxiety, and emotional pain.

Palliative Care Team

Helps children with serious medical conditions, by providing relief from symptoms, pain, and stress.