

What happens in the ward

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

Where will my child be admitted to?

If your child needs an admission to hospital for chemotherapy, treatment of an infection, or other reasons, they will usually be treated in Camperdown Ward. In some cases, your child will be admitted to one of the other wards which are used to treat children with cancer eg. Clancy, Commercial Travellers, Variety or Wade. Most of the information on this sheet will apply to these other wards as well.

When can I visit?

Parents are allowed to visit at any time. We encourage you to spend as much time as possible with your child in hospital. If you are unable to stay overnight with your child, because of outside commitments, then it is important to let your child know roughly when to expect you each day.

What about visitors?

For safety reasons, we prefer no more than two-three visitors at a time next to the bed. To protect you and other families we ask that you tell visitors of our policy not to allow people with an illness or virus to visit in the unit. **All visitors and family members must wash their hands when entering the ward.** Sometimes you may want to limit the number of calls and visitors you receive, the nurses can help you with this, at your request.

Why does the ward door have to be closed?

Camperdown ward has a special air-conditioning system that protects the children from viruses and other germs in the air. This system only works when the doors are kept closed. This is also why the balcony doors are locked.

Can I stay with my child?

We encourage one carer to stay with your child, they need to be over 18 and preferably a legal guardian. There is a fold-out single bed next to your child's bed, staff can show you how to use this, and where to get linen. There is often a lot of equipment in the rooms and it is very helpful for us if you can fold the bed away when you get up in the morning (absolutely by 9am), linen can be kept to reuse. Brothers and sisters are not allowed to stay in the ward overnight.

You may choose to use a room at the Parent's Hostel for a small fee. This can be a good option if your child is transferred to Intensive Care where sleeping at the bedside is not practical. Your social worker can help you arrange a room. If you come from outside metropolitan Sydney, you may be able to stay at Ronald McDonald House.

Where can I keep valuables?

In your room is a mounted cupboard, this can be locked with a small padlock (which you will need to bring yourself). It is useful to lock up valuable items while you are out of the room. You may use the whiteboard on front of the locker to put contact numbers for you or other key people.

Where is the parent's bathroom?

To help prevent cross-infection, the toilet and shower in your child's room is for **patients** only. There is a toilet and shower in the main corridor. There is another bathroom in the parent's room.

How do I make a phone call?

You can receive phone calls in your room. Mobile phones and wireless computer accessories cannot be used on the ward. You can use the phone in the room to call out if you have a phonecard or phoneaway card (this can be purchased from the newsagent on level 2). For urgent calls staff will arrange an outside call for you. There are public phones on each level.

Where can I have time out?

The parents room is a great place to escape to watch TV, to cook, grab a coffee, or meet other parents. It is also where the kids have group play several mornings a week. The kitchen equipment has been donated for parents. We ask that you be responsible about keeping it tidy. Many parents choose to buy packaged meals, or bring meals in and store it in the fridge in the Parents' Room.

On the ward there is a wide variety of books and articles on childhood cancer and managing treatments. Ask your nurse to point out those relevant to you. You will need to fill in the 'loan book' when you borrow and return items.

Do I have to pay for the TV?

The TV in your room provides the Starlight Channel and Nickelodeon free of charge. You can also choose to pay for a wider choice of channels. There is a form for this at the nursing station, and a box on the wall to receive your payments. There is a discount for Health Care Card recipients.

How can I entertain my children?

The playroom is for use by your child or their siblings. Please tidy up when you have finished. Check with the play therapist or staff for a summary of what is available, or access to locked cupboards. For older children who are not neutropaenic, the Starlight Express Room has computer games, craft activities, a fish-tank and a keyboard. The play therapist, librarian and school teacher will visit your child and supply activities and games.

You can arrange care for siblings between 9am and 3pm at the centre on level 1. This needs to be organised in advance and places may not always be available. Siblings can have limited access to the hospital school – talk to the teacher about this.

Can I leave?

Yes you can, let the nurses know when you will be back. If you don't want to leave your child alone, volunteers are happy to sit with your child to give you a break. A "ward granny" can be organised to meet with your child regularly, just ask the nurses or your social worker.

Can I help look after my child?

We encourage you to provide as much of your child's care as you feel able to do. Please tell the nurses about care that you would like to be involved in eg. Helping your child with bathing, feeding, medications, dressings or naso-gastric feeding and toileting. When in hospital for a long time it is important that your child keep some routines, like the daily bath, getting changed each day and spending some portion of the day on school work or play. You will meet many different nurses during your stay. The Nursing Manager (NUM) is available during the day if you have any queries concerning the care of your child. The Oncology NUM can assist you even if you are admitted to another ward. Please be aware parents are only allowed to care for their own child.

Who visits the wards?

Camperdown Ward is a favourite place for visits from film stars, pop stars and sports people. You should be asked for your permission before they enter your child's room Usually it's fun for the child and good publicity for the hospital, but don't be afraid to say no if you don't feel like being involved.

How do I let you know if something could be done better?

There is a suggestion box in all of the wards. We welcome your involvement and suggestions.

Please read your patient admission guide booklet for general hospital rules.

Any questions about this information may be directed to the Oncology Treatment Centre on 9845 2115 (8am-4pm) or Camperdown ward on 9845 1123. Further sheets are available from the Oncology staff or The Children's Hospital at Westmead's website at www.chw.edu.au. Updated April 2003.

the children's hospital at Westmead