

Family Education Sheet

Welcome to the Acute Cardiac Care Unit (ACCU)



Boston Children's Hospital

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This family education sheet gives you an overview about what to expect if you have a longer stay on the Acute Cardiac Care Unit (ACCU).

Who will care for my child?

You'll have many team members during your stay. Each member is an expert, and we encourage you to talk with them and ask questions. Some of these people include:

- Providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants)
- Nurses
- Clinical assistants
- Child life specialists
- Social workers

What should I know about my child's medical care?

- Care needs to happen around-the-clock for your child's safety and well-being.
- Your child will always need some care at night. If it's safe for your child, some of this care can be changed.
- If your child has continuous infusions (like IV fluids or milrinone, for example), the infusion line needs to be checked every hour by the nurse.
- You may see nurses being trained on Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs) by helping with your child's care. It's important that we're always training new staff so that there are always plenty of people available to care for your child.
- Milrinone might be changed from the large hospital pump on a pole to a smaller pump that your child can walk with. This depends on your child's condition and if there's a small pump available.

Can my child have the same nurse?

- We build teams for every patient to support consistency. However, you'll still meet new nurses.
- Nurses who are being trained are partnered with an experienced nurse who has already been trained. This means that some days your child will have 2 nurses.
- Clinical assistants are incredibly helpful in supporting your child's care and in building relationships with your family.
- We can't take requests for specific nurses.

- We can't take requests to not have newer nurses (who are "on orientation") care for your child.

What are rules around room safety?

- Please neatly put your personal belongings in marked areas.
- There is a "safety zone" for staff to use that must stay empty.
- Please don't play with the medical equipment and supplies in the room.
- If/when you need a break from us or other patients and families, please let us know so we can help.
- Home appliances (such as coffee pots or toaster ovens) aren't allowed in the room.
- You can put up decorations that cover up to 10% of the space in the room (walls, windows and doors). Any more than that is considered a fire hazard.

Who can visit and sleep at the hospital?

- Visiting hours are 12-8 pm (except for parents or guardians).
- There is dedicated family/patient space in the room.
- One parent/guardian is allowed to stay/sleep overnight with your child.

How do you prevent infections?

- Please ask if you want Boston Children's Hospital staff to wear a mask when entering your child's room.
- Family members who are sick with cold symptoms, a fever, are vomiting (throwing up) or have diarrhea aren't allowed to visit. Visitors should leave if they get sick.
- Your child will need to stay in their room if they're on precautions. You can ask a nurse more about this.
- Rooms need to be deep cleaned (about) every 30 days, so your child may need to change rooms.
- Your team will work with you to prepare for cleaning. You can help by taking down artwork or decorations on the walls and in the room.
- Monthly cleanings are a good time to de-clutter and organize your room.

How will you get to know my family and my child?

- Parenting your child in the hospital is hard. Please let us know how we can support you.
- We can work with you to make an "All About Me" sign to learn more about your child.
- Some families find it helpful to create a schedule. This is a good way for staff to know what works for your child. We'll do our best to keep this routine when possible.

What is the nursing routine?

- Distraction-free times for nurses are 6:45-7:30 am and 6:45-7:30 pm. This is when nurses who are leaving for the day talk about your child to nurses who are starting. Please ask non-urgent questions and make non-urgent requests either before or after these distraction-free times.
- The start of each shift is busy. Nurses need to check vital signs, do an assessment, check your child's weight and blood work/other tests if needed.
- Vital signs are checked every 4 hours and more often if needed.
- Infusion line checks are every hour for continuous infusions.
- Medications are given based on your child's needs. Please ask a nurse if you ever have a question about a medication or the timing of a medication.
- Night staff try to bundle the care and only do necessary care, so your child can sleep.

Can we leave the unit and hospital?

- There are fun places to visit if your child is approved to leave the unit.
- If your child is 18 or younger, they need adult supervision when they're out of their room.
- If your child can't leave the unit, they may be allowed to visit the resource room and/or indoor garden.
- Unfortunately, patients may not leave the Boston Children's building.
- Patients and parents aren't allowed to go into other patients' rooms.
- We know that living in the hospital can be hard and we encourage you (parents/guardians) to take breaks.
- Taking breaks helps you to recharge and allows staff to build relationships with your child.

What are the guidelines around social media?

- Please don't take photos or videos of people in clinical areas of Boston Children's if they haven't agreed to it. A Boston Children's staff member will ask you to delete the photo and/or video.
- Sharing certain information can break privacy rules that protect our patients, families and employees. Please be mindful of what you are posting on social media.
- Solicitation within the hospital isn't allowed.



Scan the QR code to learn more about social media guidelines.

This family education sheet is available in Spanish and Arabic.