

Children's Psychiatric Hospitalization

(Easy Reading Version)



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Sometimes children can't control their feelings and are in danger of hurting themselves or others. You may need help quickly to keep everyone safe. IT'S OKAY! If a child is in crisis, they may need to go to the ER.

How do I get my child to the hospital?

In the hospital, the ER is now called the Emergency Department (ED). You can drive your child to the ED ONLY if it's safe. Be sure to use child safety locks. You can call your county crisis team for help and advice, but they can't drive your child to the ED. If it isn't safe to drive your child, call 911. When you call 911, tell them:

- You are calling about a child in a **mental health crisis**
- You need safe transportation to the local hospital Emergency Department (ED)
- You'd like a Crisis Intervention Team (**CIT**) officer
- Tell them why you are worried. What is your child doing? How is he/she acting? Does he or she have access to a weapon?

What happens at the hospital emergency department?

The ED will have your child talk to a doctor and a mental health professional. They will ask you and your child about what happened before coming to the hospital and about your child's symptoms. Be prepared to wait. The ED will decide if the child needs to be admitted to the hospital. Even a child with a serious mental illness may not be admitted. If they decide not to admit your child, you will take your child home. If something changes, bring your child back or call the crisis team. If you go to a hospital that doesn't have a children's inpatient psychiatric unit, your child may need to wait in the ED for days before a bed is available at another hospital.

What information should you share? You may feel scared or like others will judge you. YOU'RE NOT ALONE! Being honest will help get your child the right help. It's okay if you don't remember everything. Share:

- Medical History
- Treatment choices: What kind of treatment do you want for your child? Therapy? Medications?
- Provider contact information: Names and numbers of therapist, doctor, case manager, etc.

How long will my child stay at the hospital?

Your child could be in the hospital for days or weeks. A professional will decide when your child is well enough to go home.

What happens during the hospital stay?

Your child will be closely watched for the first 24 hours. Your child may go to programs to help them become more stable and connect with others. You can ask the inpatient social worker or nurse for a schedule.

Can I bring my child their favorite foods, toys, clothing?

Ask the inpatient social worker or nurse about what you can bring your child. SAFETY is the most important.

Things you should not bring:

- Anything that can be used to choke someone: strings, belts, large hair bands
- Jewelry, toy weapons, electronics such as phones, iPads, laptops
- Medications (the hospital will take care of all medications)

A hospitalization won't solve all your child's problems. It keeps them safe and starts mental health treatment. It can be hard for parents to take their child home, only to see the same behaviors again. It's important to get outpatient care when your child is discharged. It might take a while before you see improvement. The hospital should give you a crisis plan with information on when to bring your child back or call your county crisis team.