

# Caring for your child after hospital care for a traumatic event

## Children's Emergency Department

Information for Patients, Parents and Carers

Last reviewed: September 2025

Next review: September 2028

Leaflet number: 1332 Version: 2

### Introduction

Having to go to the hospital can be scary for some families. It can also be scary if you had to go unexpectedly. These kinds of feelings are common. They can continue at home. This leaflet will tell you what to expect when your child has had an upsetting/ traumatic experience. It will give suggestions of how to care for them when you go home.

### What is a 'traumatic experience' in hospital?

Not all children will find these examples traumatic and some children will find other events that are not written here as traumatic:

- an accident needing hospital treatment,
- medical procedures,
- being in pain,
- physical changes to their body,
- separation from parents/main carers,
- seeing upsetting events,
- periods of unconsciousness

### What 'behaviours' can I expect?

Most families feel better within a few days or weeks. Changes in behaviour can be linked with injuries and illnesses. It is best to speak with your G.P. if you are concerned.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

## What 'behaviours' can I expect?

Younger children	Older children	Parents
Clinginess	Changes in sleeping and eating	Worrying too much about child's safety
Bed wetting	Easily startled/ jumpy	Feeling on guard/ overprotective
Being fearful	Headaches/stomach aches	Feeling anxious
Thumb sucking	Not wanting to talk or think about the event	Memories of event coming to mind unexpectedly
Unlearning skills, like from walking to wanting to be carried	Distress, or changes in mood	Feeling as if it will happen again

## How I support my child at home?

- **Go back to normal routines**

Normal routines help children feel safe.

Help your child go back to doing his/her usual activities. Do this as much as their injury or illness will let them. Calendars/ visual timetables can help with this.

- **Set normal boundaries**

It can be hard to keep boundaries whilst your child is recovering from a hospital visit. But boundaries can make children feel safe and secure and are part of routine.

- **Listen to your child**

Give your child the chance to talk about their feelings and worries. This can help them to process the events that have happened. This gives you the chance to correct any imagined or misunderstood events and answer questions in an age appropriate and honest way.

- **Have patience**

People in the same family can react in different ways. Brothers and sisters can feel upset too. Most family members just need time and reassurance that things are returning to normal.

- **Promote independence**

It is often tempting to do things for your child after he or she is injured or ill but it is more helpful for children to get their independence back as much as the injury or illness lets them to.

- **Be kind to yourself**

It will be harder to help your child if you are feeling really worried, upset, or overwhelmed.

Make sure you are eating, drinking and giving yourself the time to process what happened. If you are having difficulties, speak with friends, family or your G.P.



## Support whilst in hospital

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) team can help and advise you with any problems and to answer any questions you may have about our services and care. PALS can be contacted by patients, their carers, friends and families

Phone: **0808 178 8337** / Email: [uhl-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Website: [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/support/feedback-complaints/pals/](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/support/feedback-complaints/pals/)

The chaplaincy provides pastoral, spiritual and religious care to patients, visitors and staff of all religions and beliefs, including those with non-religious beliefs.

Glenfield Hospital: **0116 258 3413**

Leicester General Hospital: **0116 258 4243**

Leicester Royal Infirmary: **0116 258 5487**

Email: [uhl-tr.chaplaincymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.chaplaincymailbox@nhs.net)

'What? Why? Children in Hospital' is a Scottish organisation providing videos about health and hospital for children and anxiety support. Visit their website at:

[www.whatwhychildreninhospital.org.uk](http://www.whatwhychildreninhospital.org.uk)

## Support groups

### For young people:

Young minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/trauma/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/trauma/)

### Shout:

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 for free 24/7 support for young people experiencing mental health crisis.

### For parents:

**National child traumatic stress network:** [www.nctsn.org/audiences/families-and-caregivers](http://www.nctsn.org/audiences/families-and-caregivers)

**Central Access Point:** For immediate support call 111 and select mental health option or alternatively text: **0748 063 5199** for supporting within 12 hours.

Parents are the best support for their children after a traumatic event. You know your child best and what behaviours are usual for them. If you feel that your child needs more support your first contact should be your G.P.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)