

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

Children's Emergency Department

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Information for Patients, Parents & Carers

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## Introduction

Having to attend hospital can be scary for some families, especially if it is unexpected. Such feelings are common and can continue at home. This leaflet aims to explain what to expect when your child has had an upsetting/ traumatic experience and suggestions of how to care for your child when you go home.

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

Not all children will find the following examples traumatic and some children will find events not listed 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' might you expect?

Most families feel better within a few days or weeks. Changes in behaviour can be linked with injuries and illnesses, so it is important to discuss this with your GP if 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.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

Some of the common behaviours you may experience are given in the table below:

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, such as from walking to wanting to be carried.	Distress, or changes in mood	Feeling as if it will happen again

## How you can support your 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 - as much as their injury or illness will allow them. Calendars/ visual timetables can help with this.
- Set normal boundaries:** It can be hard to maintain 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 children the chance to talk about their feelings and worries. This can help children process the events that have occurred. This gives the opportunity 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 regain their independence, as much as the injury or illness allows 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 to you. If you are having difficulties, speak with friends, family or your GP.

## Support whilst in hospital

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

Tel: 0808 178 8337 / Email: [pils@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:pils@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/patient-welfare/patient-information-and-liaison-service/contact-form/](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/patient-welfare/patient-information-and-liaison-service/contact-form/)

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

General Hospital: 0116 258 3413

Leicester Royal Infirmary: 0116 258 5487

Glenfield Hospital: 0116 258 5487

## Further information and support

'What? Why? Children in Hospital' is a Scottish organisation who have videos about health and hospital for children. Visit their website at [www.whatwhychildreninhospital.org.uk](http://www.whatwhychildreninhospital.org.uk)

## Support groups for young people:

Young minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) / Text YM to 85258

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

MIND: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) / Tel: 0300 123 3393

**For parents:** Mental health support, Central Access Point - 0808 800 3302, you can call this service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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 please contact your GP.

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

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