

Further information

If you have any questions or would like to speak with someone about your child's visit to hospital, you can speak to your patient's nurse or ask to speak to one of the hospital social workers.

The funding for this resource was provided by a Grandfather who always delighted in visits from the children in his life and was developed by members of the Social Work Department at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne (2013).



Kids at St Vincent's

Tips for bringing children and young people to visit patients at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne

Before visiting the hospital

If you can, it is helpful to:

- Spend some time talking to your children about what to expect when visiting hospital. This could include what the hospital looks like, how long you will stay, other patients in the room and what it smells like.
- Describe any changes in the patient's appearance or mood.
- Reassure them that however they feel is OK (if you have any concerns you can ask to see one of the social workers at the hospital).
- Suggest they might like to bring a gift, a card or a drawing for the patient.
- Make sure they wash their hands before they come. You can use the hand sanitiser stations around the hospital.
- Check with one of the nurses if your child is unwell before they visit to see if it is safe for them to come.

Other resources

For younger children:

- *Dakota's mom has to go to hospital* by Anne Thiel
- *When Mommy is sick* by Ferne Sherikn-Langer
- *Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day* by Judith Viorst
- *My many colored days* by Dr Seuss

Suitable for children who have a loved one who is readmitted to hospital:

- *When Pete's dad got sick: A book about chronic illness* by Kathleen Long Bostram

For children visiting the Intensive Care Unit (ICU):

- The University of Michigan Medical Centre has produced a video for children visiting ICU. Type "visit ICU" in the search box access at this website: www.med.umich.edu/careguides/

Books and websites to help adults understand how children and young people respond to having a loved one sick and in hospital:

- *When a parent is very sick* by Edna Le Shan
- *How to help children through a parent's serious illness* by Kathleen McCue
- *Cereal for Dinner: Strategies, Shortcuts, and Sanity for Moms Battling Illness* by Kristine Breese

After the hospital visit

- Talk to your child after the visit to ask them what they thought and felt.
- Was it what they expected?
- What do they remember most?
- Reassure them that it was great for their loved one to see them.

This discussion will help the child to understand their feelings and thoughts and will help you plan their next visit.

Child friendly places to eat

There are a variety of cafés and restaurants in the area that can be accessed throughout the day and night for snacks and meals.

Courtyard 55 Café

This small café has outdoor seating and is located in the central courtyard of St Vincent's Hospital.

Trading hours are 6.30 am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Gertrude, Brunswick and Smith Streets

The hospital is surrounded by a number of cafes and restaurants that are ideal for teenagers.