First Hospital Admission

Most children with cystic fibrosis (CF) will require a hospital admission at some stage. If your child is about to go into hospital for the first time, you're probably wondering what to expect. Although it may seem overwhelming, hospital admissions are essential to your child's health and can deliver significant benefits.

Being admitted

When you arrive at hospital, you will need to present to Admissions and complete all the paperwork before you are sent to the ward. Your child will then be admitted by a Resident Medical Officer (RMO) who will take your child's medical history and then plan and chart the medical care required during the admission.

CF patients will be admitted to a single room, as needed, based on infection control requirements. Single rooms have their own bathroom and a fold out bed for the parent staying with them. If your child is sharing a room, there will be no other CF or chronic respiratory patients in their room. Shared rooms have a bathroom and a recliner chair for the parent.

What happens during an admission?

Most admissions are planned to treat an infection in the lungs, but they may be needed for other reasons too. An admission can be a good opportunity to catch up with the members of your child's CF team and adjust their treatment plan. Admissions usually last around 2 weeks, but it does vary for each individual and with each admission.

If your child is being admitted for an infection or exacerbation, they will require intravenous (IVs) antibiotics (ABs). This will usually happen on the first day of admission, and will require a general anaesthetic to have a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) line put in. Older children (usually over the age of 12yrs) can and will be encouraged to do this awake, but this is assessed on an individual basis. For more information on PICC lines, see our factsheet (link below).

During the admission, you and your child will meet various members of the CF multidisciplinary team. Don't be afraid to ask questions of the team to make sure you understand what's going on with your child's treatment. Members of the medical team will see your child on a daily basis to discuss ongoing treatments and targets. Depending on your child needs, you might see the:

- Clinical consultant
- Fellows/Registrar/RMO
- Dietitian
- Physiotherapist
- CF nurse
- Social worker
- Education liaison officer
- Play therapist
- Aboriginal liaison officer
- Medical students (PMH is a teaching hospital)
- KKind (Keeping Kids in No Distress) team (more information below)

Each day in hospital has a fairly set routine. Routine is important so your child knows what to anticipate, which helps them cope better with the admission. A general day includes:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Nebulisations
- Morning and afternoon physio
- Lung function tests (Mondays and Thursdays)
- IV and oral medications which will be given at set times during the day

You and your child may have opportunities to leave the hospital in between treatments, however this should be discussed with the medical team beforehand.

Cystic Fibrosis WA (CFWA) staff also visit Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) inpatients every Thursday morning to deliver a Hospital Survival Bag and provide support to the family.

Dealing with anxiety and stress

It's normal to feel anxious about your child's first admission. Preparing for the admission and understanding what is going to take place can greatly help to minimise anxiety around the unknown. Our My First Admission video series can answer many questions (link below).

For many parents, however, this can still raise issues around diagnosis or unresolved grief. If these feelings persist you could speak to the social worker or psychologist at PMH. They also have a program, KKind, which aims to minimise trauma, anxiety and distress caused by illness, injury and being in hospital. CFWA are also available for general support.

What to bring to hospital?

- Any favourite toys, DVDs, books or special blankets that might help your child settle in and feel more at home.
- Games, craft and other fun activities to help pass the time.
- Toiletries.
- Clothes to last 2 weeks, including pyjamas.
- Airway clearance equipment that you use at home e.g. PEP mask, nebuliser, as well as any toys you might use with airway clearance e.g. iPad, timer, abacus.
- Bring your nebuliser in if it has not been serviced for over a year or is due for a service.

Any electrical equipment brought in to hospital will need to be tested for safety reasons first.

Regional families

- Families travelling from regional areas are eligible for further supports. CFWA can offer the Telethon Regional Travel Subsidy of $50-$150 per admission to assist with travel expenses (link below).
- Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) is a subsidy funded by Royalties for Regions, which provides funding towards the cost of travel and accommodation for eligible patients travelling long distances to seek certain categories of specialist medical services (link below).
- Ronald McDonald House can provide accommodation to family members during their child's admission (link below).

Useful Resources

- KKind (Keeping Kids in No Distress) http://www.cahs.health.wa.gov.au/services/kkind/index.htm

- My First Admission Videos https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhSjqyL2gsw
- Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) http://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/index.php?id=pats
- PICC Line Factsheet https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/media/wysiwyg/CF-Australia/Fact_Sheets/CF_Aust_Fact_Sheet_PICC.pdf
- Procedural Anxiety Factsheet https://www.cfwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CF-Fact-Procedural-Anxiety.pdf
- Ronald McDonald House Charities https://www.rmhc.org.au/our-programs/houses/perth
- Subsidies https://www.cfwa.org.au/what-we-offer/subsidies-equipment/