

Grandparents

Being a grandparent is a wonderful and exciting time. However, it can often take time for grandparents to work out their new role and how involved they can be. Adding cystic fibrosis (CF) into the mix can make things more complicated.

It is important to be open and honest with your grandchild's parents about the support you feel comfortable offering, and also understanding what their expectations might be about the level of support they would like.

You might also be seeking support to learn more about CF, create networks with other grandparents and learn how to best support your child and grandchild with CF.

Ways You Can Help

- Provide ongoing support in any way you can and feel comfortable doing. E.g. making meals, babysitting, helping around the house, offering emotional support.
- Learn as much as you can about CF. You might not feel comfortable helping with treatment, but just understanding what's involved can be a huge help. Use reliable information, such as www.cfw.org.au and contact your local CF organisation for more information or support.
- Understand the importance of [infection control](#). Practice good hand hygiene and stay away when unwell.
- Be positive and acknowledge every win.
- Make time for the [siblings](#) who don't have CF. They often feel left out or jealous due to the extra care that the child with CF needs. Give them special time to help them cope with their doubts and fears.
- Treat your grandchild with CF the same as you would non-CF children normally. Be sensitive to their needs, but don't treat them differently. Children with CF need limits, just like their non-CF peers.
- Have your [flu shot](#) every year to protect you and your grandchild. Encourage extended family to have their flu shot too.
- Don't smoke cigarettes, cigars or a pipe around people with CF. [Second-hand smoke](#) is bad for everyone, but for small children with CF, it's worse.
- Try to keep your emotions in check in front of the parents as much as you can.



During Hospital Admissions

If your grandchild is [admitted to hospital](#), here are some tips on how you can help:

- Ask the parents how you can help.
- Call before you visit in case the child or a parent is trying to rest.
- Don't visit if you are sick.
- Ask about special precautions before you visit e.g. face mask, gown etc.
- Wash your hands when you enter the hospital room.
- Offer to stay with the child so the parent/s can rest.
- Arrange a play date or offer to care for siblings, who may be feeling left out.
- Help with shopping, washing and cleaning if you can.
- Offer to care for pets at home.
- Prepare a meal for the family members at home.

Support for Grandparents

There are various resources available to support grandparents of children with CF. CFWA's Services Team include a social worker, nurse, physio and education officer who can all provide over-the-phone support and education. We also host an annual [Grandparents Morning Tea](#) where grandparents can socialise and learn more about CF.

If you take on a greater role and become a carer to your grandchild, you may be able to access further supports. See our [Carers factsheet](#) for more information.

Useful Resources

- [Parents and Other Carers \(CFWA\)](#)
- [CFWA Factsheets](#)
- [Baby Steps Cystic Fibrosis \(CF Community Care\)](#)
- [Grandparents and Kinship Carers \(Raising Children Network\)](#)
- [Carers WA](#)

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