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Children's Hospital

## When Your Child Is in the PICU

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Welcome to Children's Hospital of Greenville Health System (GHS). Your child has been admitted to a special area of the hospital called the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). The highly trained doctors, nurses and other healthcare team members of the PICU will provide the specialized care that your child needs during this time.

The PICU has provided care for sick children in our region for more than 20 years. The 12-bed PICU at GHS Children's Hospital cares for more than 600 children each year.

The emotional support you provide your child is one of the most important elements of the healing process. For your child's health and safety, we invite you to be an active part of your child's stay. Please review the following guidelines and information about your child's care.

### Admission

Upon admission to the PICU, your child's healthcare team will assess his or her condition, connect any needed equipment and make sure that your child is stable.

In most situations, parents or guardians are allowed to remain with the child during admission. If it becomes necessary for you to leave the bedside, a staff member will show you to the family room, which is located in the PICU. A staff member will keep you updated on your child's condition during this time.

### Privacy

Two parents or Care Partners will receive a green bracelet upon admission. These bracelets must be worn at all times. If the bracelet is lost, removed or broken, the parent or Care Partner must present a photo ID to the PICU before receiving a new bracelet.

Visitors will not be permitted in the hallways or other non-private areas of the PICU during the shift changes: 6:30-7:30 a.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. During these hours, parents and guardians wearing green bracelets are allowed to stay in the room with their child, but visitors will not be permitted entry into the unit. All others may visit only when a green bracelet holder is present in the room unless PRIOR arrangements have been made with the nurse.

Please do not visit or ask questions about other patients in the PICU. Following this directive prevents the spread of germs and protects the privacy of other patients and families.

### Visitation

For your child's protection, the PICU is a locked unit. Each time you come to visit your child, please use the call box at the end of the PICU hallway to request entrance to the unit.

Visiting hours are between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Because of limited space at the bedside and to provide patient privacy, we request that no more than three people visit at a time. Visitors should remain in the patient's room during their visit and are not allowed to stand or meet in PICU hallways. Conversations and phone calls are limited to certain areas.

We request that children under 12 years of age not visit the PICU alone. Siblings between 3-11 years old are encouraged to visit while accompanied by an adult, but the visits should be limited to 15 minutes. Younger visitors may need help beforehand to prepare for what is expected so that the visit can be a positive experience. A child life specialist is available to assist with this preparation.

People 18 years or older are allowed to stay overnight with their child (two visitors is the maximum); however, only one sleep chair is available. You are not allowed to bring air mattresses or other portable sleep devices into the rooms because it may interfere with the healthcare team safely taking care of your child. Siblings are not allowed to stay overnight with patients.

### Personal Items

You are welcome to bring personal items from home to your child's room. A familiar item such as a blanket or book can be comforting to your child.

DVDs can be brought from home. We request that the DVDs are child appropriate to assist in maintaining a child-appropriate atmosphere.

Because of various conditions, plants and flowers are not permitted in the PICU. Because of allergies and safety hazards, latex balloons also are not allowed. Mylar foil balloons are an acceptable alternative.

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Please be sure all personal items are labeled. Because we cannot guarantee their safety, please do not bring valuable or irreplaceable items to the hospital.

### **Pictures**

We encourage you to document your child's journey with pictures and video recording that can be shared with family.

Please note that you are permitted to take pictures of your child only. It is a privacy infringement to take pictures of other hospital patients.

PICU team members want to be a part of your child's hospital memories as well. Please ask team members for permission before including them in pictures.

### **Waiting Area**

A waiting area is available for all visitors. It is located before the double doors of the PICU hallway. A vending machine is available there, as is a TV. Please be respectful of all visitors using the waiting area. We also request that visitors help keep this area tidy.

### **Family Area**

In addition to the waiting area, a family area is available for immediate family members of children in the PICU. It is located just outside of the PICU and includes a refrigerator, coffee machine, computer and TV.

### **Learning About Your Child's Medical Care**

The PICU team wants you to take an active part in your child's care. The team welcomes questions about your child's condition, treatment and care. We want you to feel comfortable communicating with us.

It may be helpful to write down words you do not understand or questions that you have about your child.

Healthcare workers may use medical terms that you do not understand. If you do not understand their explanation, ask them to explain things in a way that you can understand. It is important to us for you to understand all aspects of your child's care.

Talk with your child's doctor and nurses regularly so that you can stay informed on the progress of your child's condition.

Staff members should introduce themselves to you when they come into the room. If a staff member forgets to do so, ask for his or her name. We also have a board in the room where each of your healthcare team member's names should be written. Please remind staff members to put their names on the board. This simple step will help you get to know your healthcare team.

### **Update on Your Child's Progress**

Upon admission, a password can be created to allow staff to give patient information over the phone. The number to call is **(864) 455-7146**. No phone calls for updates are permitted during shift changes: 6:30-7:30 a.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m.

If you would like to establish a website where you can post updates so that your family and friends can get information on your child's condition—and where they can leave you messages of encouragement—a free service called CarePages is available. For more on CarePages, go to [www.carepages.com/ghs](http://www.carepages.com/ghs) or see the card enclosed in this packet.

### **Is My Child Hurting?**

It is natural to wonder if your child's medical condition or medical treatment may be causing your child pain. If your child is unable to communicate, the PICU healthcare team is trained to understand and respond to body language that expresses pain or discomfort. In most cases, comfort measures are all your child needs to ease his or her discomfort, but pain medication may be administered if comfort measures do not appear to help your child.

### **Infection Control**

Good hand cleaning is the best way to prevent the spread of any possible infections to your child. All visitors, including parents or guardians, are asked to clean their hands before and after visiting the PICU to decrease the chance for infection. Sinks and waterless hand sanitizer are located in each patient's room.

Visitors should not enter the PICU if they have felt sick or have experienced the following symptoms in the past 24 hours: vomiting, diarrhea, rashes, fever, body aches, chills, sore throat, and cough or sinus drainage.

Extra precautions will be taken during flu seasons and outbreaks of RSV and rotavirus because of the increased risk to PICU patients.

Protective gloves and coverings are often worn by the PICU healthcare team. This measure protects both your child and healthcare team members from possible infections.