

# INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND PARENTS REFERRED TO WESTMEAD CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, CARDIOLOGISTS AND SURGEONS

## Hospital Appointments

Our doctors may refer you to The Heart Centre for Children for paediatric assessment of your child's heart or maternal foetal medicine. The following information may help to make this experience an easier transition for the patient and the family. There are two locations to see the doctors, the following information is for the hospital, The Heart Centre for Children, located at Westmead Children's Hospital in Sydney. There is a section in the information pack on the private rooms for some of the cardiologists, our receptionists will advise you which location you are booked for.

### Cardiology / Cardiac Surgery

**Phone:** 9845 2345

**Fax:** 9845 2163

**Email:** [hcfc.schn@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hcfc.schn@health.nsw.gov.au)

**Location:** Diagnostic Services building, level 3

The Heart Centre for Children incorporates the cardiology department (Adolph Basser Cardiac Institute), cardiac surgery department, Kids Heart Research and Edgar Stephens Ward at The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

More information can be found at [www.heartcentreforchildren.com.au](http://www.heartcentreforchildren.com.au)

### How to make an appointment:

Call the Heart Centre reception on 9845 2345 to make appointments or for more information.

Staff

### Cardiologists

Dr Gary Sholler

Dr Steve Cooper

Dr Megan Sherwood

Dr Phil Roberts

Dr Julian Ayer

Dr Christian Turner

Cardiac Surgeons

A/Prof David Winlaw

A/Prof Richard Chard, Deputy Director

Dr Ian Nicholson

Visiting Medical Officers



Dr David Celermajer, Cardiologist - Adolescent Congenital Heart Disease

Dr Peter Robinson, Cardiologist - Adolescent Congenital Heart Disease

### Private Rooms for cardiologists and Surgeons

Your child may be referred to the following doctors for consultation and pending surgery if needed. Please note these doctors see patients at their private rooms as well as the Children's Heart Centre at Westmead Children's Hospital. The following telephone numbers are for the private rooms.

#### **Drs Christian Turner/Julian Ayre/ Gary Sholler/Steve Cooper–**

**Address:** Suite 15, Level 2 Children's Hospital Medical Centre, 2 Hainsworth Street Westmead.

**Phone:** (02) 9891 6800

**Fee:** \$450 (\$295.00 claimable from Medicare)

Car parking back of the building (behind Children's Hospital Medical Centre) Coins or card used

#### **Drs Ian Nicholson/Dr Yishay Orr**

**Address:** Suite 7, Level 1 Children's Hospital Medical Centre, 2 Hainsworth Street Westmead.

**Phone:** (02) 9635 5325

**Fee:** \$200.00 (\$72.75 claimable from Medicare)

Car parking back of the building (behind Children's Hospital Medical Centre) Coins or card used

A referral letter would have been forwarded direct to the doctors rooms. If you have any chest x-ray films please take them with you on the day.

If you have any questions regarding your appointments please do not hesitate to contact us or the doctors rooms directly.

### Admission

Childhood heart problems sometimes involve staying in hospital for investigations, changes in medications and possibly surgery. This can understandably be a stressful and scary experience. We're here to support children and their families through what can be a difficult time.

To learn more about your child's surgical admission to hospital you can download the Heart Centre information handbook from <http://heartcentreforchildren.com.au/images/HCF-Cardiac-Surgery-Manual.pdf>. This contains general information, but the specifics will be covered by your doctors who specialise in dealing with children with heart problems.

Your child may need to be admitted to hospital for reasons other than surgery, such as the commencement or changes to medications, day procedures or cardiac catheterisation.



Our staff are here to support you and answer any questions or concerns you might have. If you'd like to know more about what to expect when your child is admitted, please contact a Clinical Nurse Consultant (02) 9845 2345.

## If Paediatric patient is an inpatient for surgery

### If a child is in ICU:

Parents are automatically guaranteed accommodation in the "Parents Hostel" and can be with the child.

### If a child is in the cardiac ward:

Options for parents:

- Can stay in Ronald McDonald House
- One parent can stay with child 24/7 and accommodated in the ward with the child
- Motel accommodation close by (check Wotif/Westmead Children's Hospital)

To co-ordinate Ronald McDonald House accommodation Ring Cardiology Department Children's Hospital Westmead -02 98452345. Ask for Jennifer or Karen or social work department – they will organise with social worker for accommodation.

## Support for Families

There is a team of specialists at the Heart Centre for Children who are dedicated to providing emotional care and support to infants, children and families at any stage following a diagnosis of heart disease.

This team includes clinical nurse consultants, child life therapists, social workers and psychologists. Some of the ways we can help include:

- Providing parents with an opportunity to talk about their experiences, worries or questions regarding their child's heart condition.
- Helping children and young people to cope with difficulties they may be having in relation to their heart condition, medical procedures or other aspects of life.
- Supporting siblings, grandparents and extended family members. For example, supporting parents with how to talk to their other children about their brother or sister's heart condition.
- Ongoing care and support for families who have lost a child due to heart disease.

If you would like to talk with a member of the family support team or make an appointment to meet, please call **1800 025 509**. If we aren't able to take your call immediately, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

## Heart Beads

Heart Beads is a programme that was started at the Heart Centre for Children in 2008.

Upon attendance at pre-admission clinic, or admission to the ward, you will be given a brochure regarding the programme and the opportunity to enrol and begin your Heart Beads journey, and you will receive a Heart Beads package with your child's name and date of birth



already strung and ready to go. For each procedure, treatment, good and bad day and other milestone, there is a unique bead which will be given to you to add to the string.

The beads are a great way to trace your child's hospital journey. They provide a tool for children and families to be able to talk about the illness and experience, and to reward your child for their courage.

If you have questions about this programme, please don't hesitate to call our Preadmission Nurse via our reception on (02) 9845 2345.

### **Ronald McDonald House**

**Phone:** 9845 0600

**Fax:** 9845 0601

**Email:** [rmh@rmhwestmead.org.au](mailto:rmh@rmhwestmead.org.au)

**Location:** Located at rear of wards; entry via Redbank Road, Westmead (off Briens Road)

Ronald McDonald House Westmead is a Home Away From Home for families of seriously ill children being treated at the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Families must live 100kms or more away to be eligible to stay.

### **How to make an appointment**

Contact the Manager on 9845 0600, or page 6601 via the Hospital switchboard on 9845 0000.

### ***Staff***

Debbie Roberts - Executive Officer

Simone Daher - House Manager

Bernadette Costello - Assistant House Manager

Leah Dawson - Fundraising Coordinator

### **Enquiries - 9845 0600**

Overnight Volunteer - 9845 0628

Parents' Telephone - 9845 0620

Visit the [Ronald McDonald House Website](#).

### **Parent / Staff Accommodation**

**Phone:** 9845 2958

**Fax:** 9845 2959

**Email:** [hostel@chw.edu.au](mailto:hostel@chw.edu.au)

**Location:** Ward Street, level 2

The Hospital Accommodation Unit manages accommodation for parents/carers of children admitted to the Hospital. Accommodation is currently available on the ward and in the Parents Hostel.

Fees and conditions apply as follows:



### *Parents Hostel and Ward Rooms*

- No children are permitted in the Parents Hostel.
- Sofa beds are available for one parent/carer and are available at no charge.
- Kitchenette and laundry facilities are available.
- A cafe, dining room and restaurant are available in the Hospital.
- Parents must visit the hostel office to register their stay on the day of admission of their child and before they take up their accommodation, whether they are staying in the ward or in the hostel.
- Parents/carers are required to pay daily for accommodation.
- Accommodation is also available for staff.



## Alternate Accommodation

Name of Accommodation	Distance from CHW	Contact
<b>Wesley Lodge</b> 175 Hawkesbury Rd Westmead NSW. 2154	4 min Walk	<a href="http://www.wesleylodge.com.au/">http://www.wesleylodge.com.au/</a> phone 02.9635.1233 fax 02.98937018
<b>Formule 1</b> 377-383 Great Western Hwy. Wentworthville NSW.2145	7 min Drive	<a href="mailto:E5807-RE@accor-hotels.com">E5807-RE@accor-hotels.com</a> <a href="http://www.formule1.com.au">www.formule1.com.au</a> phone 02.9769.1240 fax 02.9769.1250
<b>Chisholm Cottage</b> 49 Alexandra Ave Westmead NSW 2145	4 min Drive 20 min Walk	Phone/fax 02.9633.4228
<b>Courtyard Marriott</b> 18-40 Anderson St Parramatta NSW 2150	15 min Drive	
<b>Claire Residence</b>	20 min Drive	Phone 02.9639.0763
<b>Ronald McDonald House</b> Redbank Rd Westmead NSW 2145	2 min walk	<a href="mailto:rmh@rmhwestmead.org.au">rmh@rmhwestmead.org.au</a> <a href="http://www.rmhc.org.au">www.rmhc.org.au</a> Locked Bag 4001 Westmead NSW 2145 Phone 02.9845.0600 Fax 02.9845.0601
<b>Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme</b>		<a href="http://www.royalfarwest.org.au/">http://www.royalfarwest.org.au/</a> <a href="mailto:admin@royalfarwest.org.au">admin@royalfarwest.org.au</a> PO Box 52 Manly NSW 1655 Phone 02.8966.8500 Fax 02.9977.7134
<b>Youth Hostels Australia</b>		<a href="http://www.yha.com.au/">http://www.yha.com.au/</a>
<b>Last Minute Accommodation</b>		<a href="http://www.travelmate.com.au/">http://www.travelmate.com.au/</a> <a href="http://www.budgethotelssydney.com">www.budgethotelssydney.com</a> <a href="http://www.needitnow.com.au">www.needitnow.com.au</a> <a href="http://www.lastminute.com.au">www.lastminute.com.au</a> <a href="http://www.cheapsearcher.com">www.cheapsearcher.com</a>
<b>CAFAT</b> Suite 1a, Level 6. Westfield Towers 88-100 William St		Phone 02.9380.8933



Woolloomooloo NSW 2011		
<b>Convoy for Kids</b> PO Box 1218 Goulburn NSW 2580		1300 663 669
<b>Kids In Need (Central Coast)</b> PO Box 3268 Bateau Bay NSW 2261		<b>Pauline</b> phone 02.4385.1485 <b>Rhonda</b> phone 02.4332.4848 <b>Pat</b> phone 02.4332.6345
<b>I.P.T.A.A.S.</b> Isolated Parents Travel & Accommodation Assistance Scheme		<a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/">http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/</a> <b>Albury</b> phone 02.6058.4455 or 02.6058.4498 fax 02.6058.4680 <b>Bathurst</b> phone 02.6339.5312 fax 02.6339.5357 <b>Broken Hill</b> phone 08.8080.1432 fax 08.8080.1695 <b>Dubbo</b> phone 02.6841.2264 fax 02.6884.7223 <b>Goulburn</b> phone 02.4823.7805 fax 02.4823.7929 <b>Lismore</b> phone 02.6620.2168 fax 02.6622.1834 <b>Tamworth</b> phone 02.6766.3946 fax 02.6766.4576 <b>Taree</b> phone 02.6592.9229 fax 02.6551.2087
<b>Map</b> of getting from where you live to the Children's Hospital at Westmead		<a href="http://www.travelmate.com.au/">http://www.travelmate.com.au/</a>

### Post-surgical follow up with your Sydney Surgeon or Cardiologist

Your surgeon will advise you of the need for post surgical/procedure follow up. Please take note of these appointments and attend as necessary.

Your surgeon will forward a letter and an operation report to us locally so that the information is here when you return. Our practice will make an appointment to see you in follow up 6-8 weeks post surgery. For an unexpected prolonged stay, please contact our practice and we will make a further appointment for you at a later date following discharge.

### Follow up with Newcastle Adult and Paediatric Heart Centre

Your surgeon will advise you of the time frame you need to be reviewed at our practice. If an appointment has not been previously made for you, please ring immediately following discharge or when you are advised of the need for a further appointment with our practice.



Please ensure you advise our receptionists that your child is post surgery and requires the appointment within a set time frame. This is usually around 6-8 weeks following surgery, however sometimes your surgeon will review you and let you know an earlier or later time frame.

Please contact our practice so that an appointment can be made for your child or yourself. Phone: 49621811 or email [reception@naphc.com](mailto:reception@naphc.com) or [reception2@naphc.com](mailto:reception2@naphc.com) We are here to help you and your child, so please feel free to contact us at anytime.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Below are some of the questions that are frequently asked by patients and families. Click on one of these categories for FAQ's relevant to that area.

#### **Q: How do I make a clinic appointment?**

In order to see a Cardiologist, you need to have a referral from your General Practitioner (GP) or specialist, addressed to an individual Cardiologist. This should be posted or faxed to us (see contact page for details). If urgent, please call us on (02) 9845 2345.

#### **Q: How long will my appointment take?**

Generally, clinic appointments take between 30 and 60 minutes, depending on the tests that your child requires. We try our best to keep to appointment times, but emergencies can happen so please allow extra time when coming for your appointment.

Pre-admission is an all-day clinic, starting at 9am. It involves seeing multiple specialists and having a number of tests done. This clinic generally finishes around 2.30pm but times can vary.

#### **Q: What age range of children do you treat?**

We see fetal patients, newborns, infants and children of all ages, up to around 16 years old, at which time the transition process to adult care starts.

#### **Q: What do I need to bring for my child's appointment?**

Please bring your Medicare Card and a referral letter addressed to the Cardiologist you are seeing or request form from your doctor.

#### **Q: What happens at preadmission clinic?**

Your child will meet with the preadmission nurse, have an ECG performed, meet with an anaesthetist, possibly meet with a genetic counsellor about participating in the DNA Bank, have blood tests performed, a chest x-ray done and see the cardiac resident or registrar for patient medical history. Some patients will also have a cardiac ultrasound (echo) done.

Preadmission clinic is a great time to ask any questions you may have before your child's surgery

#### **Q: Where do I find the Heart Centre for Children?**

The Heart Centre for Children (sometimes called the Cardiology department) is in The Children's Hospital at Westmead. We are on Level 3 (one floor above the ground floor), towards the back left of the hospital. If you are coming for your first visit, you may want to





ask at the Main Enquiries desk at the entrance to the hospital, where volunteers are often available to escort you.

**Q: Where can I find parking?**

There is limited street parking around The Children's Hospital at Westmead and there are often restrictions on how long you can park on the street. The alternative is the paid parking station next to The Children's Hospital at Westmead on Hainsworth Street.

**Q: How do I get from the maternity ward at Westmead Adults' Hospital to The Children's Hospital at Westmead?**

There is a walkway that links the two hospitals. Ask staff at Westmead Adults how to locate this and speak to security via the intercom to gain access. The Heart Centre for Children is the first department on the left once you reach The Children's Hospital.

**Q: Who can I talk to if I have more questions?**

If you have questions regarding your child's care, please contact the Clinical Nurse Consultants at the Heart Centre for Children on (02) 9845 2345.

**Q: Who can I talk to about breastfeeding (or difficulties with feeding)?**

There is a Lactation Consultant available within the hospital who can help you with breastfeeding your infant. The nurse caring for your child during your hospital stay can put you in contact.

Alternatively, if you are at home and would like to speak to someone, please contact your local Child and Family Nurse or call our Clinical Nurse Consultants on (02) 9845 2345. Questions during pregnancy can also be directed to your midwife.

**Q: Who can I talk to if I need financial assistance?**

The best contact is the Social Work team at The Children's Hospital at Westmead who can be contacted on (02) 9845 2642 or via the Main Enquiries desk when you come to the hospital. The social worker can meet with your family to discuss your financial situation and determine what support is available.

**Q: Are interpreters available?**

We do have a medical interpreting service available for all languages, so if you require this, please advise the admin staff when making your appointment.

**Q: Who can help me talk to my child's school about their heart condition?**

There are a range of people who can speak at or to your child's school. This may include explaining a heart condition and what it means for your child and asking for their classmates' support, or helping the school to develop a management plan.

If you would like to discuss having someone help in this area, please contact our Clinical Nurse Consultants on (02) 9845 2345.

**Q: Will my child get his/her results on the day?**

For most tests done during clinic appointments, results will be given on the day. A letter will also be sent from the Cardiologist to your referring doctor with all test results.



**Q: Where can I find more information about admission and surgery?**

You'll find more information about this on the Admission or Surgery page. Each has a link to the cardiac surgery manual which gives a good overview of what to expect when coming in to hospital.

**Q: How can I prepare my infant for hospital or surgery?**

Hospitalisation and surgery can be a frightening and overwhelming prospect for children of all ages. As infants cannot understand verbal explanations, preparation ahead of time is minimal. However, recognising what may be stressful for your baby during their stay and using this as a basis for planning can help decrease their fear and anxiety and enhance coping.

**What are the common stressors for infants?**

- New and different routines
- Unfamiliar environment
- Separation from parents
- Having many different caregivers
- Parental stress

**What can I do to support my child?**

- Keep your baby's routine as normal as possible in the lead up to hospitalisation.
- Let the nursing staff know your baby's usual routine so , where possible, they can follow it
- Bring your baby's favourite comforters (e.g. blanket, soft toy or dummy) and some soothing music to create a more familiar environment.
- Try to organise for at least one parent or caregiver to be with your child as much as possible so that they will have familiar touch, voice and smile. Nurse or cuddle your baby as often as possible.
- If you do need to leave for a period of time, consider leaving one of your belongings, such as a T-shirt or blanket,. Your baby will find comfort in snuggling into something that smells like you.
- Your baby will sense if you're anxious or stressed so try to remain calm. One way of doing this is by asking questions and keeping well informed about your child and their progress.
- For further information, please contact: Karen Weir Child Life Therapy Department (02) 9845 3717

**Q: How can I prepare my toddler for hospital or surgery?**

Hospitalisation and surgery can be a frightening and overwhelming prospect for children of all ages. Recognising what may be stressful for your child during their hospital stay and preparing them ahead of time can decrease misunderstanding, fear and anxiety and enhance coping.



### **What are the common stressors/fears for toddlers?**

- Separation from parents/caregivers
- Being in contact with strangers
- Unfamiliar environment
- Different routine
- Medical equipment that looks and sounds scary

### **What can I do to support my child?**

Briefly tell your child about their upcoming hospitalisation one to two days beforehand using simple and positive language.

Allow them to choose a favourite toy or object to bring to hospital. Arrange to have one familiar caregiver stay with the child at all times, where possible. If this is not possible, leave something belonging to a parent or caregiver.

- Let the nursing staff know your child's usual routine so , where possible, they can follow it.
- Read age-appropriate books about hospital.
- Purchase a toy doctor's kit which can be used for role-play.
- As toddlers are not able to easily verbalise their fears, it is normal for them to cry or be clingy before, during and after hospitalisation. Be patient and provide a lot of reassurance.
- For further information, please contact: Karen Weir Child Life Therapy Department
- (02) 9845 3717

### **Q: How can I prepare my preschooler for hospital or surgery?**

Hospitalisation and surgery can be a frightening and overwhelming prospect for children of all ages. Recognising what may be stressful for your child during their hospital stay and preparing them ahead of time can decrease misunderstanding, fear and anxiety and enhance coping.

### **What are the common stressors/fears for preschoolers?**

- Being separated from family and caregivers.
- Being in pain
- Having a part of their body damaged or injured
- They have vivid imaginations and may be more frightened of their own fantasies than what will actually happen.
- They may believe hospitalisation is punishment for an unconnected event.

### **What can I do to support my child?**

- Tell your child about hospitalisation about three to five days in advance. Use simple and positive language and answer their questions honestly, especially about any discomfort that may be felt.
- Try to use 'soft' or the least frightening language possible e.g. 'make a small opening' instead of 'cut.'
- Make sure your child knows why he or she is coming to hospital and reassure them that nothing they did caused the illness.



- Read age-appropriate books about visiting the hospital.
- Engage in role play with a toy medical kit.
- Arrange a pre-admission tour with a child life therapist.
- Allow your child to help pack his or her suitcase including any favourite toys, books and photos that will serve as comforters.
- Bring along a favourite pillow or doona.
- Reassure your child it is OK to cry and express their feelings

For further information, please contact: Karen Weir Child Life Therapy Department  
(02) 9845 3717

**Q: How can I prepare my school-age child for hospital or surgery?**

Hospitalisation and surgery can be a frightening and overwhelming prospect for children of all ages. Recognising what may be stressful for your child during their hospital stay and preparing them ahead of time can decrease misunderstanding, fear and anxiety and enhance coping.

**What are the common stressors/fears for school-age children?**

- Going to sleep during an operation and not waking up
- Loss of privacy and control
- Being separated from family and friends
- Pain or the possibility of pain
- Dying during surgery or while in hospital

**What can I do to support my child?**

Begin talking to your child one or two weeks before hospitalisation/surgery. Answer questions honestly. Check for understanding by having your child explain back to you what is going to happen.

- Read books and play ‘hospital’ with a toy medical kit.
- Let your child pack their own suitcase.
- Bring along a favourite pillow or quilt.
- Organise a pre-admission tour with a Child Life Therapist.
- Reassure your child that anaesthetic is a medicine that helps them sleep for a little while so they don’t feel, see or hear anything during the operation and that they will wake up when it is over.
- Encourage your child’s friends/school to visit or keep in contact via telephone, letters, email or text.
- Offer the child as much privacy as possible and as many choices as readily available before and during hospitalisation.
- Practice coping strategies such as counting slowly and breathing deeply in through the nose and out through the mouth.

For further information, please contact: Karen Weir Child Life Therapy Department  
(02) 9845 3717



### **Q: How can I prepare my adolescent for hospital or surgery?**

Hospitalisation and surgery can be a frightening and overwhelming prospect for children of all ages. Recognising what may be stressful for your child during their hospital stay and preparing them ahead of time can decrease misunderstanding, fear and anxiety and enhance coping.

### **What are the common stressors/fears for adolescents?**

- Loss of control and independence
- Loss of privacy
- Separation from and loss of status amongst peers
- Changes/damage to their body and appearance

### **What can I do to support my child?**

- Include adolescents in all discussions and decisions about their care.
- Support them to make a list of their own questions to ask the medical team.
- Encourage research and preparation.
- Invite your child's friends to visit the hospital or keep in contact via email, letters, text or phone.
- Provide your adolescent with a notebook or journal in which to express their thoughts and feelings. Reassure them that it is ok to feel as they do.
- Respect their privacy at all times.
- Encourage your adolescent to bring a few items from home e.g. books, computer, music, bed linen etc.
- For further information, please contact: Karen Weir Child Life Therapy Department
- (02) 9845 3717
- Q: How can I prepare my other child(ren) for their sibling's hospitalisation or surgery?
- A child's illness or hospitalisation has the potential to affect the entire family, including their brothers and sisters. Siblings may experience a wide range of feelings and concerns and may struggle to understand and come to terms with changes in family life and routines. Being aware of their possible reactions and preparing them ahead of time can decrease misunderstanding, fear and anxiety and enhance coping.

### **What are some common reactions of siblings?**

*Guilt:* Siblings may feel responsible for their brother or sisters hospitalisation and think that they have said or done something to cause it.

*Fear:* They may worry that they will "catch" the illness and get sick too.

*Jealousy/Anger:* They may be upset and resentful that their brother or sister is getting so much attention and things at home have changed

*Loneliness:* They may miss having you around to comfort them or their brother or sister to play with

*Abandonment:* They may feel that you don't love them anymore

*Worried/Confused:* They may be confused about what is happening and why and worry about what will happen in the future



### **What can I do to support my other children?**

- Be honest- talk to siblings about what is happening and why. Allow them to ask questions.
- Involve siblings when preparing your other child for hospital. Encourage them to help pack their brother or sister's favourite toys, books or games.
- Reassure them that nothing they said or did made their sibling sick and they cannot catch it.
- Make sure siblings know another responsible adult will be caring for them while you are at hospital and you will come back as soon as you can.
- Leave a security object with the siblings if appropriate.
- Maintain as close to your normal routine as possible e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes
- Set aside time to spend with siblings. This makes them feel that they are important too.
- ?Where possible, bring siblings to the hospital to visit.
- Encourage siblings to draw pictures, write letters or send cards to their brother or sister in hospital and vice versa.
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### **Q: Where can I stay while my child is in hospital?**

One parent/carer can stay at the child's bedside on a fold-out bed in Edgar Stephen Ward. If your child is in ICU, one or both parents/carers can stay in the Parents Hostel. Priority is given to parents of children in ICU and bookings can be made with the Parents Hostel Coordinator on Level 2 on the day of surgery.

### **Q: Can my other children visit their brother or sister in hospital?**

If your child is on Edgar Stephen Ward then siblings are very welcome to visit, as are other family members and friends. Visiting hours are 8am to 8pm, but we prefer visitors not to come between 12pm and 2pm so that the kids can have some quiet time. We also ask that visitors stay away from the hospital if they have a cold or flu or other illnesses as if our patients catch anything it can impact on their recovery.

If your child is in ICU (either Grace Centre for Newborn Care or the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit), it is best to discuss having siblings or anyone else visit with the nurse looking after your child.

It is a good idea to prepare siblings for their visit by explaining what they might see and how their brother or sister may behave. If you would like to talk to someone about how to prepare your child for a visit to the hospital, please contact Child Life Therapy on (02) 9845 3717.

### **Q: Where can I give feedback about the Heart Centre for Children?**

We welcome both positive and constructive feedback to help us to improve our services. You can either fill in a feedback form online ([click here](#)) which will come to the Heart Centre Manager, or you can contact the Service Improvement Unit at The Children's Hospital at Westmead via [siu@chw.edu.au](mailto:siu@chw.edu.au) or (02) 9845 3442.



**Q: What if my child is not covered by Medicare?**

If your child does not have a Medicare number then you will need to pay for the appointment and any tests or procedures on the day. These fees vary. Feel free to contact us for an estimate of the cost for your appointment.

**Q: What do I do if my child gets sick before his/her appointment or surgery?**

If your child falls ill within a few days of his/her appointment or surgery, please contact us on (02) 9845 2345 and we will advise you further.

**Q: Can my child take a flight with a heart condition?**

In the vast majority of cases, children with heart abnormality can travel by air without difficulties or special precautions.

Air travel is very much part of our way of living, is a means by which many local and overseas patients come to us, and need not be seen as a problem. There are a few special situations to consider.

These include conditions where blood oxygen levels are lower than normal (cyanotic conditions) prior to surgery and others where lung blood pressure is increased (pulmonary hypertension). Situations where your child's cardiac condition has recently been unstable also deserve special consideration.

In airplanes at high altitude, just as at the top of high mountains, the oxygen levels in the air are lower than at ground level. Long flights may also produce dehydration because of the air conditioning systems used. These can be important considerations for vulnerable children. Short flights of less than 2 hours are usually well tolerated.

We would suggest discussing your intentions with your cardiologist if:

- (1) your child has one of the types of conditions mentioned above,
- (2) your child is due to have or has just had cardiac surgery,
- (3) your child has had recent problems with their heart condition stability, or
- (4) you are still concerned.

If necessary, the option exists to provide a supply of oxygen on board a flight after application by you to the airline. This may incur a cost. Maintaining good fluid intake to avoid dehydration is also important.

**Q: When can I visit a patient in hospital?**

The visiting hours on Edgar Stephen Ward, where most of our patients stay, are 8am to midday and 2pm to 8pm, 7 days per week. Midday until 2pm is a quiet time so that patients and their families can have a rest.

We do ask that visitors stay away from the hospital if they have a cold or flu or other illnesses as if our patients catch anything it can impact on their recovery.



**Q: What should I bring a child in hospital?**

Hospitals can be boring places for children so toys and games (particularly ones they can play in bed) are usually appreciated by our young patients, as well as favourite foods or treats (check with the parents first), DVD's, cards and balloons.

You may want to treat the family too, as having a child in hospital is hard on parents and siblings. Offering to help a family with meals, housework, looking after siblings, or sitting with a child in hospital so that parents can take a break are also good options that most families appreciate.

**Q: Is there anything the Heart Centre needs?**

If you are thinking about donating goods, we always appreciate baby wraps and DVD's to add to the movie library we have on Edgar Stephen Ward. Toys are very welcome but unfortunately we cannot accept soft toys due to health and hygiene concerns.

If you have any other ideas or would like to know what our most pressing needs are at the moment, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Fun things to check out while you are in Hospital**

The Starlight Foundation works with most children's hospitals and has been an integral part of Westmead Childrens Hospital for many years. Everyday, Captain Starlight organises many activities and performances in the [Starlight Express Room](#). If you can't make it down, don't worry - you can watch the Starlight Channel from your own room.

The in-house radio station [Radio Bed Rock](#) provides light relief in the evenings. The volunteers at Bed Rock are dedicated to creating and having fun with many on-air activities which will help you through your stay.

For a little bit of peace and quiet pop on down to the library - the [Book Bunker](#). Kindly set up and run by Scholastic Australia, it is the home of thousands of books and lots of CD ROMs.

Head down the ramp from the foyer to The George Gregan Foundation all access playground located outdoors in the... courtyard. With a fantastic aquatic theme, there is a giant pirate ship, a lighthouse, sea creature sculptures including a whale cubby, tortoises, a crocodile, a walrus and an enormous octopus. There is a play area for toddlers, swings, climbing equipment and a quiet area to read a book or just relax and look up at the clouds.

Since its inception in 1995, [Operation Art](#) has showcased the artistic talents of many New South Wales school children. A very special program, Operation Art combines the creative spirit of children with their desire to do something to help other kids.

**Helpful Links:**

<http://www.heartcentreforchildren.com.au/staying-in-hospital-faqs.html>

<http://www.heartcentreforchildren.com.au/tests-and-procedures-faqs.html>

<http://www.heartcentreforchildren.com.au/information-for-kids-faqs.html>

<http://heartkidsnsw.org.au/about-us/contact-information/>

[www.zippertickers.com.au](http://www.zippertickers.com.au)

