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Specialties and Services

## How to Keep Siblings Involved

Siblings can feel more involved with the care of their hospitalized brother or sister by participating in activities at home or when visiting the hospital.

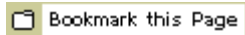
### Activities to do at home:

- Make pictures to decorate their brother or sister's hospital room.
- Read books on tape so their brother or sister can hear a familiar voice (jokes, music, stories, school information and gossip on tape are just as good.)
- Pick photos of family, friends and pets for their brother or sister to share with hospital staff and friends or hang in their room.
- Pack a bag for their brother or sister to have while they are in the hospital – especially when the admission is unplanned. Include favorite books, toys, stuffed animals and pajamas.
- Pick their brother or sister's favorite music and videos to send to the hospital.
- Make videotapes of what they are doing at home or at school.
- Make a sign with information about their brother or sister. Information can include:
  - Their brother or sister's likes such as favorite toys, books, songs, TV shows, movies or games
  - Their brother or sister's dislikes such as getting up in the morning or foods they do not like
  - Nicknames
  - Special words, such as "binky" for pacifier, that their brother or sister uses to identify certain items

### When siblings visit the hospital:

- Siblings should be allowed to visit whenever possible.
- Prepare siblings for what they will see and hear. Describe how their brother or sister looks or acts when their behavior is different from normal.

- If their brother or sister is very ill, injured, and/or not feeling well, suggest siblings pack a bag of things to do quietly while they are at the hospital.
- Siblings can play games or work on art projects with their brother or sister if he or she is feeling up to it.
- If their brother or sister is in a quieter mood, siblings can read a book, tell a story or talk about their day.
- Allow siblings to join the patient in the playroom on the unit. If their brother or sister is unable to go to the playroom, the sibling can choose an activity to bring back and share.



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