

Your Child's Health Care Team

Who is on the team?

There will be many staff caring for your child. Most will have different roles. All staff, students and volunteers wear a hospital Identification badge. Feel free to ask people their names and roles as needed.

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (CHW) is a teaching hospital. This means there will be medical specialists from the Medical College who may be caring for your child. There will be a team of people to help you and your child, 24 hours a day, while in the hospital. It may help to know about the different people who will be helping you and your child.

As a parent, you know your child better than anyone. You are the most important member of your child's team. Be sure to ask any questions that you have about your child's care or condition. As you think of questions, write them down so you remember to ask them later.

Medical doctors on the care team

- **Attending or staff physician.** This doctor is a CHW Medical staff doctor and is responsible for your child's medical care. This doctor always leads your child's medical team and is in charge of the fellows, residents and medical students on the team.
This could be your own private doctor or a doctor you meet for the first time at the hospital.
- **Primary Care Physician (PCP).** This might be your child's pediatrician or a family doctor. Your child's PCP may act as your child's attending while they are in the hospital.
- **Fellows.** A fellow is done with medical school and a general residency. They have more training that is focused in a certain area of care such as allergy, gastroenterology (GI) or cardiology. Not every patient will be seen by a fellow.
- **Hospitalists.** These doctors specialize in caring for children in the hospital. They may be the attending doctor for your child if the PCP asks them to care for your child. If this is the case, the hospitalist will be in close touch with your child's PCP.
- **Residents or interns.** Residents are doctors who have finished medical school. Residencies last three to five years. They are considered senior residents when they are in their third or last year.
An intern is a first year resident. Interns make routine care decisions along with the senior resident. Interns are a great source of information about your child's care. They often make rounds with the team members caring for your child. Rounds means that the medical and support team talks about the status and care of each patient in the unit.
- **Specialists.** A number of specialists may be seen, depending on your child's condition. Specialists include surgeons, gastroenterologists (GI), neurologists, and more.
- **On-call physicians.** Doctors or residents who are called after hours or when your doctor is not available. They cover your child's care until your doctor or their teams are available.
- **Teams.** There are general medical teams. Some teams are named by colors, such as blue, green or red. The colors normally indicate where your child is admitted. It might also indicate what kinds of doctors your child needs, such as surgery, GI, cardiology or ENT.

Other team members

- **Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) or Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP).** These nurses have advanced educations. They specialize in an area of nursing. An APN may do assessments, manage your child's care and write prescriptions under the supervision of a doctor. They also support the nursing staff through education. The APN's can help identify resources in the hospital and community for patients and families.
- **Care Partner.** A care partner is a nursing assistant who works closely with the RN to care for your child. Not every child will have a care partner every shift. It depends on the needs of your child and the staff on the unit.
- **Chaplain.** The Chaplain provides spiritual guidance to children and families.
- **Child Life Specialists.** A specialist who helps children and families cope with the stress of being in the hospital. They do this with play, imagery and distraction.
- **Dietitian.** This team member provides help with nutrition. They can also help with meal plans.
- **Lab Technologist.** A person trained to draw blood and do lab tests.
- **Medical students.** Medical students are still in school; they are not doctors. Medical school normally lasts four years after college. At the end of the fourth year of medical school they receive their MD degree. Students are on the medical team to learn about health and disease. They help the medical team gather information and follow up on tests related to your child's care. They will always be supervised by a licensed doctor.
- **Nurse.** The Registered Nurse (RN) plans and gives nursing care to your child. They can get in touch with every other team member. They answer questions and help families get the right resources, as needed.
- **Occupational Therapist.** The team member that helps children learn daily living skills such as eating and getting dressed. They also provide treatment that helps children develop to their fullest potential.
- **Pharmacist.** An expert in the use of medicines. They prepare your child's medicines.
- **Physical Therapist.** The team member who helps children with their physical activity. This helps each child to function at their highest physical level.
- **Physician Assistant (PA).** A healthcare professional who is licensed to practice medicine as part of a team with physicians and other providers. PAs provide a broad range of health care services under the supervision of a physician or a surgeon. They can do physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, develop treatment plans, perform procedures, prescribe medicine, and counsel on preventive health care. They may assist in surgery as well.
- **Radiology Technician.** A person who takes your child's X-rays or scans (CT, MRI).
- **Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP).** A specialist who treats children who have breathing problems.
- **Social Worker.** The team member who helps with the physical and emotional well-being of children and their families.
- **Speech Language Pathologist.** The team member that helps children in their communication and feeding/swallowing activities.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.