

"Why Can't I Visit?"

Helping children stay connected when separated due to COVID-19

Provide your child with honest and simple explanations

"We haven't been able to visit grandma because the hospital made a rule to help keep everyone safe.

They want to stop the new virus, "COVID-19", from spreading around the hospital or to other people. The doctors and nurses have been taking very good care of grandma."

Explaining the reason for your loved ones hospital stay will help ease their anxiety.

Encourage your child to ask questions

Let your child's questions help guide your conversation.

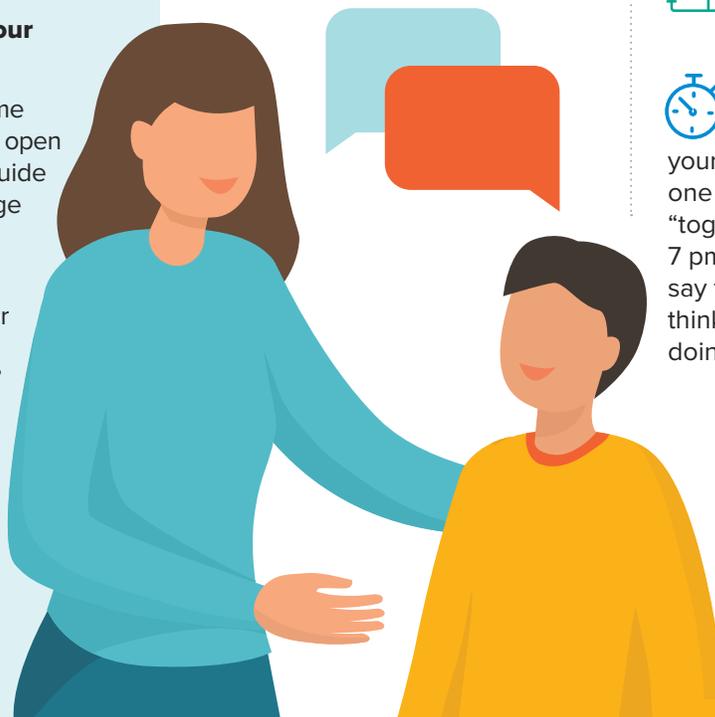
Use open-ended questions that require a longer answer than just "yes" or "no" such as:

- "What questions do you have?" or "What are you worried about?"

Acknowledge and express your feelings.

If your child is having a hard time expressing how they feel, being open about your feelings can help guide the conversation and encourage them to share their feelings.

- "I'm sad to be away from grandma. Sometimes I cry or need a hug. What kinds of things does your body feel?"
- A child may share not being able to see their loved one is unfair. Validate your child's feelings and remind them why staying home is the right choice.



Ways to connect from afar

Giving your child a role can help them feel involved and give them a sense of control. Ask them how they'd like to connect with their loved one.



Write a letter that can be mailed or emailed to their loved one. Some good starters are:

- 5 things I love about you
- I remember when we...
- I can't wait to...
- This can be mailed or emailed to their loved one. To send mail to a patient in the hospital, address as follows:

Patient: [Name of patient] c/o
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
One Medical Center Drive,
Lebanon, NH 03756



Send decorations for their hospital room.



Connect with their loved one on the phone, a video chat or by texting. Your child can read a story, talk about their day or play games over video chat.



Mail a hug. Have your child trace and cut out their handprints. Decorate the handprints with pictures or encouraging words. Cut a length of string or yarn. Tape the string to the bottom of the palm of each handprint. Now the patient can wrap the strings around them whenever they need a hug.



Keep a journal to share with them when your child is reunited with their loved one.



Create a special moment. Plan a time everyday where your family at home and your loved one in the hospital can do something "together". For instance, every night at 7 pm, listen to or sing a special song, say their name out loud or simply think of your loved one in the hospital doing it too.



Children's Hospital at
Dartmouth-Hitchcock

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