



Children's
Health Scotland

YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOSPITAL

#myhealthmyrights

Going into hospital can feel like a trip into the unknown. This guide will give you an idea of what to expect, who will be looking after you, and what will happen. Remember, we are here to help.



YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOSPITAL

GOING INTO HOSPITAL

Why do I have to go in and do I have to stay?	P3
Where will I stay?	P4
Who will be looking after me?	P5

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOU

Things to do	P6
What about rest and free time?	P6
Food glorious food!	P7
Education	P8
My space	P8
Keeping in touch – visitors and mobiles	P9

HAVING YOUR SAY

Do I have a say in what happens?	P9
What is 'consent'?	P10
How can I decide what's best for me?	P11
What if I'm asked to take part in medical research?	P12

OPERATIONS

Preparing for surgery and anaesthetics	P13
--	-----

HEALTH RIGHTS

Information about your rights	P15
-------------------------------	-----



GOING INTO HOSPITAL

Going into hospital can feel like a trip into the unknown. This guide will give you an idea of what to expect, who will be looking after you, and what will happen.

Why do I have to go in and do I have to stay?

If you are going in because you need treatment, tests, or an operation, you only stay in hospital for as long as is absolutely necessary.



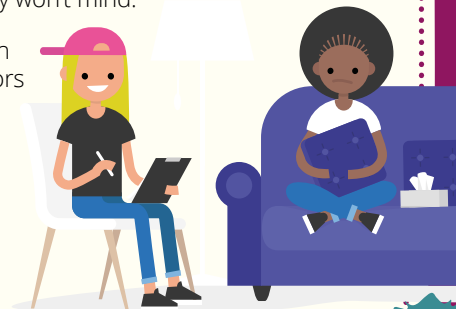
Day surgery and day care mean you can go to hospital in the morning, have your treatment, and go home the same day. Even after a major operation you can sometimes leave hospital soon after and continue your treatment and care at home with the help of your parents, carers and sometimes a community nursing team.

You will probably have lots of questions. It's a good idea to write them down so that you can ask your doctor or nurse.

You can also ask someone else to write down what they say if you just want to focus on listening. Remember, if they say something you don't understand, you can ask them to explain it again – they won't mind.

For more information on speaking to doctors go to:

www.gosh.nhs.uk/teenagers



GOING INTO HOSPITAL

Where will I stay?

Not all hospitals have wards specially for young people. Some stay in children's wards, some in adult wards and a few in adolescent wards or young people's units. Talk to your GP or consultant about your choices at the hospital you'll be going to, before you go in.

Even if you are on a ward with younger children, staff are experienced in working with young people, and there are often lots of activities to keep you busy. Ask what services they have as there may be rooms or bays set aside and sometimes there are young people's units for teenagers.

You may find you are expected to share with young people of different ages and sex. If this is a problem, ask staff if they can help you.

Even if you are not in a children's hospital or a young people's unit, you will have the same rights.



GOING INTO HOSPITAL

Who will be looking after me?

Each day there is a nurse who oversees your nursing care. They will also answer your questions and find out what is going on if you don't understand what staff tell you or what they are doing.



“I wish the doctors and nurses would listen to me. Can I stop them rushing me into having things done before I realise what's happening?”

When your nurse finishes their shift, they will introduce you to the person taking over until they return, so you always have a point of contact. Your parent or carer can also help you if they are with you.

It can seem as if there are a lot of people looking after you, so some wards have photo boards showing who everyone is on the ward. Just ask if you are not sure. All staff should wear a badge telling you who they are and what they do.

To see a who's who video of healthcare staff visit:
www.gosh.nhs.uk/teenagers/your-hospital-visit/whos-who



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOU

Things to do

If you are new to hospitals, the nurses and sometimes other patients will tell you what's going on and most hospitals have free booklets telling you about their services. Just ask your nurse for one.

As well as your treatment during the day, there's lots to do. Many wards have computers and DVDs, board games, arts and craft materials. There are books and magazines as well and you can chat to the other young people and children. There may be music and art sessions, and if you are in for more than a few days, you should get school lessons arranged for you. Have a look at the Education section on page 8.

What about rest and free time?

It is a good idea whatever ward you are in to bring in or ask for headphones for the television and/or radio. Take your personal technology devices/smartphone etc. with you. That way you are not disturbed, and you won't disturb others.

A young person's routine is different from younger children and adults so you might want to talk to staff about how they can work with you. They may be able to be quite flexible.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOU

Food glorious food!

You do not need to worry about what to eat when you are in hospital. There is lots of choice and you can get a snack if you are hungry in between meals. You can also check with the ward if someone can bring in food for you and if there is somewhere to store it.

Mealtimes can seem a bit different to what you are used to. Breakfast is usually around 8am, lunch about midday and dinner around 5pm. For lunch and dinner there are several main meals, snacks, salads, or sandwiches. There will be a choice of pudding as well as fruit, yoghurt, and ice-cream. Each day you will get a menu and can choose for the next day.

In some units, there are kitchen areas for you to prepare food and drink or ask as you may be able to make snacks in the ward kitchen – cereals, toast, pizzas.

You can request food, like halal or kosher if you need this. Remember to be careful about offering food to other people on your ward – they may be about to have an operation or are on a special diet, in which case they shouldn't have anything.

In some wards, you may not be able to have hot drinks at the bedside. So, check first with the nurses.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOU

Education

Coming into hospital doesn't mean missing out on schoolwork. You have a right to education in hospital so ask about this as soon as you feel well enough to study.



Look at the European Association for Children in Hospital (EACH) Charter Point 7:

www.each-for-sick-children.org/each-charter/the-10-articles-of-the-each-charter.html

Some hospitals have teachers working on the wards and some have their own school room, with the latest technology to help you keep up with schoolwork and in touch with your friends at home. If you can't get to the school room, the teacher can come to



your bedside. If you know you are going into hospital you may want to talk to your teachers about this and plan any work you can do while you are absent. Ask the hospital to keep in touch with your own school so that you don't miss out on anything. For more information go to: <http://enquire.org.uk/information/factsheets/factsheet-17-when-a-child-cant-go-to-school>

My space

There will be times when you want some privacy to phone or text a friend, to talk to your parent or carer, do your schoolwork, or study for exams. You might want the doctor to fully close the curtains round your bed when they come and see you. Hospitals all have different arrangements, so ask the nurse in charge of your care to help you.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOU

Keeping in touch – visitors and mobiles

Most children's/young people's wards have 'open' visiting for family. This means that, within reason, they can visit any time. There should also be somewhere for your parent or carer to stay overnight if you want this.

On an adult ward, visiting hours may be shorter and your parent/carer may not be able to stay overnight. There may be an exception to this for example for young people with complex needs. So always ask.

Friends can visit, but some wards are quite small, so this may limit the number of visitors. Ask about the use of your mobile.



HAVING YOUR SAY

Do I have a say in what happens?

Yes, you do. For a full explanation of what this means for you please look at the NHS Inform website on Consent and Confidentiality for Under-16s.

Visit: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/caresupport-and-rights/health-rights/communication-and-consent/information-for-youngpeople-using-nhsservices/>



HAVING YOUR SAY

What is 'consent'?

The EACH Charter Point 5 says children, young people and their parents and carers have the right to informed participation in all decisions involving their healthcare.

You have the right to have a say in all decisions about your healthcare and decide if you have treatment. You may find it helpful to discuss this with your parents, carers, medical staff or an independent person called an advocate.



An independent advocate is a person who:

- is only there for you
- can help you work out what you want to say
- can help you get your point of view across
- can speak for you if you want.

Your hospital or carers can help you find out about advocacy services.

HAVING YOUR SAY

How can I decide what's best for me?

Most young people are happy to consent to treatment they know will make them better once they feel they have been given the right information in a way they can understand. Here are some questions to help you make decisions:

How might the treatment help this?

Can I choose to have a different treatment, or no treatment?

What are the risks?

How long will it take?

What is my problem?

Will it be better for me to have this treatment or not?

If the treatment is urgent, can I have time to think about it?

What will the treatment involve - what will happen to me?

If I don't want the treatment, can it be delayed in case I change my mind?



HAVING YOUR SAY

What if I'm asked to take part in medical research or help with teaching student doctors and nurses?

Research is needed to improve healthcare even more and most people are happy to help, but again, this is your choice.

So, take time to think about it and discuss with your carers and medical staff.

Anyone who asks you questions or examines you in hospital should introduce themselves and ask your consent to what they want to do. You have the right to refuse to have extra people present when your doctor or nurse is seeing you.

“I'm 14 and don't want my parent/carer to know everything about my treatment. Can I get my doctor to check with me first before he talks to them?”



OPERATIONS

Preparing for surgery and anaesthetics

It is always good to be prepared and you may have lots of questions about this part of your treatment. Rather than give you too much information, please follow this link on the Royal College of Anaesthetists website to leaflets which tell you everything you need to know.

<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patient-information/patient-information-resources/information-children-parents-carers>.

You can find out more about having an anaesthetic by visiting the information for patients and relatives page at www.rcoa.ac.uk/patientinfo.

Some hospitals in Scotland have their own leaflets for young people, parents, and carers about preparing for surgery and anaesthesia. You can ask at your pre-admission clinic or when you get to hospital.

Parents and carers should be able to accompany you into the anaesthetic or recovery room unless there is a very good reason not to. Young people should have the choice about this through discussion. Your views should be taken over someone else's unless there is real reason not to.

Check in advance what your hospital's policy is by talking to the nursing staff and the anaesthetist or ask about this at your pre-admission clinic.

You can also ask about pain control before your operation so that you don't need to worry about being sore afterwards. Always tell your nurse if you are in pain.



YOUR RIGHT TO HEALTH

All children and young people under the age of 18 have rights, no matter who you are, where you live or what you believe in. These rights help you live, grow, and develop.

EACH

Children's Health Scotland is a member of the European Association for Children in Hospital (EACH) which has produced a Charter of 10 standards or rights for children and young people's healthcare at times of illness. To view this Charter visit www.each-for-sick-children.org.



With the help of young people we have produced a Young People's EACH Charter as a mini booklet. To see a copy, visit our website or give us a call on **0131 553 6553**.

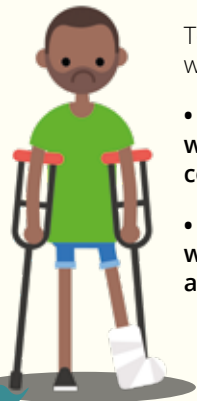
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the 42 rights that all children and young people are entitled to. Article 24 talks about young people's rights in relation to healthcare. 'You have the right to the best health possible and to medical care and information.'

To find out more visit the following websites.

• **UNICEF**
www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

• **NHS INFORM**
www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights



YOUR RIGHT TO HEALTH

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

The Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland works with his team to protect the human rights of children and young people. To find out more about their work, visit:

Children and Young People's Commissioner
www.cypcs.org.uk

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 put the UNCRC into a Scottish statute. It encourages Scottish Ministers and public bodies to consider children's rights and requires them to prepare reports on what they are doing to progress children's rights.

REMEMBER YOUR HEALTH RIGHTS

You have the right to:

- go to hospital if you have a serious illness or condition.
- get information and treatment to keep healthy, including about drugs and alcohol, immunisations, sexual health and mental health.
- have an interpreter, BSL, translated information or information.
- your information being kept private and safe. Health staff will only share information that helps them to treat you. They need your permission to tell anyone else.
- have doctors and other health staff talk to you about your health, medicines, and procedures in a way you can understand.
- be involved in decisions about your health.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SCOTLAND

We are the only charity in Scotland dedicated to informing, promoting, and campaigning on behalf of the healthcare needs and rights of all children and young people. We provide a range of services, expertise, information, and leaflets focused on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and their families.

As a well-established charity we are very proud of the services we provide. However, we never forget that our achievements are only possible thanks to the generosity of trusts, supporters, and volunteers. This help is always necessary to help fund our work, so that every child and young person can exercise their right to the best possible health. If you would like to help fund our work, then please go online and make a donation at **www.childrenshealthscotland.org**. If you would like to get involved with our fundraising efforts please email **fundraising@childrenshealthscotland.org**.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more specific information about young people in hospital and helpful organisations visit our website **www.childrenshealthscotland.org**, or give us a call on **0131 553 6553**.



 **0131 553 6553**

 **www.childrenshealthscotland.org**

 **enquiries@childrenshealthscotland.org**



Children's Health Scotland, 22 Laurie Street, Edinburgh, EH6 7AB



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government through CYPFEIF and ALEC Fund Grant. Children's Health Scotland is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Scottish Charity No. SC006016. Registered Company No. 100114. All materials © Children's Health Scotland 2022.