

Children going into hospital

The Royal College of Surgeons of England Patient Liaison Group

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Going into hospital is a worrying time for children and their parents, so good information is essential. Children's wards are usually friendly, caring places where the staff are used to welcoming families, and dispelling fears. Books and information can help in the preparations as they provide an opportunity to talk to the child about what is going to happen. Look out for booklets from the ward or unit your child is being admitted to. Try to visit the ward with your child before admission.

The following books are recommended reading, and although they may not be specific for your child, they may provide the opportunity to discuss the more general aspects of what might happen.

Going to the Doctor

by Anne Civardi

Usborne First Experiences 2000, ISBN 0 7460 41179

A very simple book for 3–6 year olds about visiting the GP. Jenny and Jack Jay have to go to the doctor with their mother. Jack has a sore arm and Jenny has a sore throat. Jack has his immunisation injection whilst in the surgery. Excellent for its purpose.

I don't want to go to hospital

by Tony Ross

Anderson Press 2000, ISBN 0 8626 4968 4

In this story, the little princess from *I don't want my potty* has something up her nose. She doesn't want to go to hospital, but, when she finally does, she enjoys herself so much that she wants to go back. An enjoyable story that gives children a chance to say they are frightened too. There is no detail of what happens whilst she is in hospital but the one picture of her there shows it as a friendly place and has plenty of non-medical detail to talk about. All royalties go to help the Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Suitable for ages 2–6.

My first visit to hospital

by Rebecca Hunter

Evans Brothers Ltd 2000, ISBN 0 237 52017 6

This book is about a little boy called Jonathan who must go to hospital to have grommets in his ears. The book has bright photographs and simple, large print sentences we see his day surgery. Dad takes him in, and he meets his special nurse. The admission procedures are shown, his meeting the doctor, being taken to theatre, his postoperative recovery, and his going home. There is an index and a page of advice to parents and teachers. The consultant on this book was Cheryl Hooper, the director of Action for Sick Children. Excellent.

Tomorrow I will feel better

by Rien Broere

Evens Brothers Ltd 1999, ISBN 0 237 52160 1

Rosie is a very positive little girl and enjoys her new pyjamas, packing her bag, and the fact that mum and teddy are going to take her to hospital for her heart surgery. She doesn't like having blood tests, though, and she realises that mum is worried. Lots of procedures are shown in some detail, and as Rosie is in hospital for some time, we see her cards and presents and are told about her visitors. When she can finally come home, there is a party with chocolate cake. Highly recommended.

Separations – Hospital

by Janine Amos

Cherrytree Press 1998, ISBN 0 7451 5271 6

This book is well written with good illustrations for children aged 4 to 10. It uses letters between Jake and Steven, and Anya and Auntie Jan to tell what it's like in hospital, discusses what the children are worried about and has ideas for activity and contact whilst in hospital. In another story Alex worries about having his birthday in hospital, but the nurses throw a party on the ward to cheer him up. Simple facts about injections, anaesthetics and waking up in the recovery room combined with advising to ask questions all go to make this a very good book, full of practical advice. It does not go into any details about the operation itself or outcomes, which is better left to parents and clinicians.

Talking it through – Hospital

by Althea Braithwaite

Happy Cat Books 2000, ISBN 1 899248 44 7

This book has been written in conjunction with a hospital play coordinator at Addenbrooke's NHS Trust. It tells the story of Alex who is going in for an operation to put grommets in his ears and Kate who is having her tonsils out. It starts in outpatients, visiting all the various departments, then they visit the ward and meet lots of other children who are sick. Kate and Alex then get admitted on the same day. The book covers the preparations, the recovery, and the going home.

It is well written and well illustrated for children aged 4 to 7. It's more along the lines of this is 'what is going to happen to you' and does not openly encourage the child to ask questions, however if the parent was reading the book with the child, no doubt questions would arise.

Topsy and Tim go to Hospital

by Jean and Gareth Adamson

Ladybird Books 1998, ISBN 0 7214 2853 3

This straightforward story is a good introduction to hospital for both a prospective young patient and his brothers and sisters. Tim is admitted because he has bumped

his head but the pictures include a child with an IV drip and another with her leg in traction which widens the usefulness of the book. The two children's reactions are realistic with Topsy feeling left out and Tim looking suitably apprehensive in places but the overall impression is one of hospital being a friendly place where parents are around, staff smile and children play together. For children ages 3–7.

You and your child in hospital

by Margaret Carter

Methuen, ISBN 0 416 03052 1

This book was written in collaboration with The National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital (NAWCH). It is primarily for parents and has masses of good advice to make it easier for your child to prepare for hospital and whilst in hospital. NAWCH is now known as Action for Sick Children and apparently has good information on children going into hospital.

People at Work in a Children's Hospital

by Deborah Fox

Evans Brothers Ltd (People at Work series) 2000, ISBN 0 2375 1963 1

A similar book about people who work in a hospital, but again lots of information about who does what and what happens in a hospital. The book follows a young boy into the operating theatre and introduces other areas of the hospital giving an up to date insight into the day to day work of the hospital and its staff.

A Visit to the Sesame Street Hospital: featuring Jim Henson's Sesame Street Muppets

by Deborah Hautzig and Joe Mathieu (Illustrator)

Random House 1985, ISBN 0 3948 7062 X

Grover takes a tour of the hospital before he goes in for tonsil surgery. It features familiar *Sesame Street* characters and is a fun book for a serious subject.

What should a really good hospital look like?

by Department of Health 2003

This publication offers the reader a simple guide through the different functions of a hospital and the services it provides. The publication is available on the DH website: <http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/NSF/children/hosplooklikekids.htm>.

Children-friendly website links:

Action For Sick Children

A charity that works towards better treatment for sick children.

<http://www.actionforsickchildren.org/>

Children First

Children First is a national project somewhere children, young people and care-providers can readily access support and information around child health.

<http://www.childrenfirst.nhs.uk/index.php>

National Association of Hospital Play Staff

The object of this charity is to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people who are patients in hospital.

<http://www.nahps.org.uk/>

Letterbox Library

Letterbox Library provides books that reflect the multi-cultural world in which we live and have a selection of books on child health and disability; some books are published in dual languages. To order a brochure ring 0207 503 4800 or visit their website.

<http://www.letterboxlibrary.com/acatalog/index.html>

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