

Before Your Child Starts the Ketogenic Diet

What to expect

Your child will stay at the hospital to start the ketogenic diet. That way, your child's health-care team can check to see how your child is doing. While you are at the hospital, your child's doctor and dietitian can teach you the things you need to know to manage your child's diet at home. Starting the diet can be difficult, and it is important that your child's health-care team is there to help you manage it.

There are some things you can do before your family checks into the hospital that will help you and your child. Here is a list of some of the things to do to get ready.

Learn more about the diet

It will be easier for you and your child to start the diet if you know more about it. To learn more, please read the book called *Ketogenic Diet: A Treatment for Children and Others with Epilepsy* by John Freeman, M.D., Eric Kosshoff, M.D., Jennifer B. Freeman, and Millicent T. Kelly, R.D. You can check it out from the Family Resource Center. The Family Resource Center can be reached at (206) 987-2201. It is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. It is in the Train Zone on the 5th floor, next to the elevators.

Food

The diet might involve foods that your child has not tried before, like heavy whipping cream. This will be part of the diet, and it is good to

know if your child likes it. Your dietitian will help you find ways to use new foods, like whipping cream, in recipes that your child will like.

Medicine

Make sure all of your child's medications are changed to forms that will work for the ketogenic diet. A lot of medicines have sugars in them. When your child starts the ketogenic diet, it is important to make sure your child's medicines do not have sugars in them. The kinds that usually work best are pills and tablets that your child can swallow. The ones that will not usually work are chewable tablets or liquid medicines, since they are often made with sugar. It is important to check with your child's dietitian about medicines.

Before you come to the hospital

In order to prepare your child to start the diet, it is important that you do these things:

- The night before your child comes to the hospital, avoid giving them food after midnight. Your child can drink as much water as they want, but avoid all juices, soft drinks, or other beverages.
- Avoid feeding your child breakfast the morning that your family comes to the hospital. Hospital staff will give your child a ketogenic breakfast.

(Continued on back)

Before Your Child Starts the Ketogenic Diet: What to expect

- Do not give your child any medicines in the morning until after their blood is drawn at the hospital.

Things to bring to the hospital:

- Your child's medicines. It is very important to bring any medicines that you have not gotten from Children's. Please bring them in their original packaging.
- Toothpaste that is OK to use on the ketogenic diet. Your dietitian will give you a list of the kinds that you can buy.
- Comfortable clothes for yourself for 4 days. Your child might also want to have one or more changes of clothes.
- Your child's favorite toys and books.
- Videos or DVDs from home. The Children's Playroom also has videos you can check out while your child is staying in the hospital.
- Favorite sippy cups, straws, or bottles.
- Your own pillow and blanket from home, if you would like to bring it.

TO LEARN MORE

- **Neurology (206) 987-2078**
- **Your Child's Health-Care Provider**

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call the Family Resource Center at (206) 987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health-care provider.