Stress Management
Before it gets to be too much

When your child has a health problem, it’s easy to get stressed. You may feel helpless, tired, anxious and angry when your child needs you the most. Here are some tips about how to manage stress and get help if you need it.

What are signs of stress?

- Muscle tension
- Faster heartbeat
- A “knot” in your stomach
- Talking louder or faster
- Loss of or gain in appetite
- Headaches
- Inability to sleep
- Frequent crying
- Frequent forgetting
- Loss of sense of humor
Ways to manage stress

Say one or more of these phrases:
• It is normal to feel overwhelmed in the hospital or at long clinic appointments.
• It is normal to be afraid of what is or may soon be happening to my child.
• It is normal to be confused about why this is happening to my child, my family and me.
• It is normal to feel on the edge and that the smallest things can set me off.
• I know I need to take care of myself to be able to care for my child.
• It is OK if I take a break from being at my child’s bedside. I can ask for someone to stay with my child.
• If it does not seem like the right time to leave my child’s bedside, I can ask not to be disturbed by phone calls or visits.
• It is normal to wonder if I could have done something different for my child.
• I will tell my child’s doctor what I’m worried about.
• If I don’t understand something, I will ask about it.

Do one or more of these:
• Go for a walk or step outside for some fresh air.
• Take a coffee or snack break.
• Take deep breaths.
• Talk to a friend or someone who is caring.
• Write down your thoughts and feelings.
• Listen to music you enjoy.
• Get a free massage in the Family Resource Center.
• Come to the Family Resource Center for information and support.
• Take a long, hot shower.
• Do an activity with your child.

What to do during a stressful time
• State your needs. Avoid using insults or blaming someone. Keep a notebook by your child’s bed to write down questions, tasks and ideas.
• If you feel yourself reacting, give yourself permission to take a break.
• Try to listen to what is being said, instead of thinking about what you’re going to say next.
• Compare what you’re saying with what you really mean.
• Think about lots of ways to solve the problem.
• Decide who will take what actions after reaching an agreement.
To Learn More
• Seattle Children’s Protection Program
  206-987-2194
• Social Work Intake Line
  206-987-2760
• Family Resource Center (level 7, River zone)
  Staff available Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
  Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
• Ask your child’s healthcare provider
• www.seattlechildrens.org

• It is OK if you make mistakes. Be kind to yourself.
• If you can’t work things out, find a person you respect to help bring about a solution.
• Talk to one of the staff listed, or call one of the numbers on this flyer.

Getting help
If you have concerns about your child’s care, talk to your child’s nurse, charge nurse or manager. You may also contact Patient and Family Relations at 206-987-2550 (English and Spanish), send an e-mail message to family.feedback@seattlechildrens.org or fill out one of the comment cards located throughout the hospital.

At Children’s
• Social Work
  206-987-2760
• Pastoral Care
  206-987-2273
• Emergencies – after-hours operator
  206-987-2000
• Family Resource Center
  206-987-2201
• Child Life volunteers
  206-987-2037

In the community
• Crisis Line – 24 hours
  800-244-5767
• Community Information Line (211)
  Dial 211 from cell or landline
• Parent Trust Family Help Line
  800-932-4673
• Parent to Parent Support program
  206-829-7046 or
  (ARC King Co.)
• Spanish speaking: 206-829-7027
• Vietnamese speaking: 206-829-7037
• WA State Psychological Association Psychologist Referral Service
  www.wapsych.org
• WA State Domestic Violence Hotline
  800-562-6025 – 24 hours
• Washington Recovery Help Line
  866-789-1511
• Teen Link
  888-431-8336

Online:
• www.kidshealth.org (in Spanish too)
• www.crisisclinic.org

Free Interpreter Services
• In the hospital, ask your child’s nurse.
• From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line
  1-866-583-1527.
  Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Seattle Children’s offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children’s will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children’s. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider.