


# Let's talk about...

## Preparing Your Child for the Hospital

**G**oing to the hospital can be scary for kids. Preparing them ahead of time can help them feel less nervous and more equipped to cope with what's ahead.

### Tips to Keep in Mind:

- **Get Creative:** Ask your child to make drawings, signs, or cards to decorate the hospital room.
  - **Be honest:** Explain why they need to stay at the hospital using clear and simple words.
  - **Read together:** Use children's books to show them what a hospital looks like. There are also pictures on the UC Davis Children's Hospital website.
  - **Questions:** Encourage questions so that children can be prepared for what is happening.
  - **Share the plan:** Tell them how long they will stay and remind them that the doctors and nurses are there to help.
  - **Pack together:** If you know the visit is coming, let your child help pack. Don't forget:
    - **Comfort items:** A favorite blanket, stuffed animal, and familiar play items.
    - **Photos:** Pictures of family, friends, and pets.
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- **Stay connected:** Help your child talk to friends and family through phone or video calls.
  - **Play:** Most children's hospitals have activities to promote play and a sense of normalcy. Ask the staff what options they have available.

For more information or to connect with a Child Life Specialist, please visit: <http://ucdavis.health/childlife>