

Medbuddy Guidelines

Purpose

The Medbuddies Program is designed to help children and their families through the difficult experience of being in the hospital for an extended period. Our program pairs hospitalized children of all ages with a medical or nursing student to be a friend to the child throughout his or her stay in the hospital. The medbuddy is there to give support, encouragement, comfort and companionship to the patient, to be a friend whom the child can count on, to be an aid to the family of the patient, and help them in whichever way is most beneficial. The students, who are strictly acting as volunteers and are not involved in any delivery of health care, have the opportunity to understand the issues related to illness from the child and family's perspective.

Guidelines

- Always sign in and out at volunteer services located in room L2613 (on the second floor of the Women's Hospital).
- Always wear your University of Michigan student ID badge when visiting your medbuddy or when in the hospital.
- On your first visit, always introduce yourself to the patient and family and explain the program. The children and families do not always know that you are coming and may be confused about what a medbuddy does. Also make sure to introduce yourself to the nurse on duty who may also be unaware of the program.
- Be sure to bring medbuddies contact cards for the patient to keep, for the nurses to put in the "Card-Ex", and for the family of the medbuddies to keep. This card will contain your contact information to allow the patient or medical staff to contact you if a patient returns for admission. Please encourage the family to feel free to contact you if they return to the hospital.
- Plan visits around the child's schedule including physical therapy sessions and sleeping and feeding times, within reason, depending on your own schedule as well. Work with the nurses and families to figure out optimal visit times. Ask when the child has the most down time or when help is needed the most.
- Don't miss a visit. The children really look forward to your visits. If you tell them you will be there, you really shouldn't miss it.
- Although visits with patients outside of the hospital are quite unusual, the family and not the medbuddy must initiate visits with patients outside of the hospital if desired. Any outside contact (phone calls and email excluded) must then be approved by the nursing coordinator or child life specialist on your floor. Approval must be obtained in writing and returned to the medbuddy coordinator in charge of your floor. Please report back to the nursing coordinator/child life specialist after the visit.

Reminders

- Building a relationship takes time and effort. It is our preference that you spend at least 6 hours a week with your medbuddy. Remember your medbuddy is in the hospital in the evenings and over the weekend. These may be great opportunities to spend time with your friend.
- Remember, you are not a parent of the child. If parents are absent, your presence is as a friend. You may not take over the duties and responsibilities of a parent.
- You are not there in a medical capacity. Medical decisions and actions must be left entirely to the medical staff and the nurses on duty. Please do not interfere at all with the charts or medical equipment. Please do inform the nurses and staff if there is a monitor that is alarming or a tube that has dislodged.
- Always be polite to the staff. The doctors and nurses on the floors work very hard and deserve your respect.
- Get the phone number to the nurse's station or the buddy's room.

Help

If you are ever concerned about something that happens when you are visiting your medbuddy, please feel free to talk the medbuddy coordinator for your floor. It is very easy to get attached to your buddies and to worry about them. We have can contact the appropriate staff on each of the floors and can pass any concerns onto them.

Also, if you ever feel that a buddy is not a good match for you, please do not hesitate to tell us. It happens. We can find someone who may be better suited for a particular child.