

Infants and Children in the Hospital

Every year in the United States, more than three million children are hospitalized, but there are ways to help make the hospital stay as safe as possible. Ask anyone who comes into the room to wash or sanitize their hands. Have a list of your child's medications, allergies, family history and history of previous hospitalizations. If children are old enough to understand, instruct them to not touch their wound or incision. Also, to reduce the risk of infection, limit the number of visitors, especially other children.

"The kids can be exposed to infectious diseases in the hospital themselves because they tend to touch things. They tend to be on the floors more than we are, and so for those reasons, it may be good to have them stay at home, unless it's very important for them to be there."

"I think what happens is the nurse is very much aware of the vulnerability of these infants and children until they've had all their vaccines, until their complete immune system has developed."

Your newborn's first checkup will happen in the hospital. A nurse or doctor will: Perform a physical exam; Check the baby's weight, length, and head circumference; Perform screening tests for common conditions; Give your baby the first immunization and let you know what to expect; Offer advice about things like breast feeding, diapering, and sleeping; Answer your questions and address any of your concerns.

Nursery personnel are highly trained in the care of newborns, but it's important for you to feel comfortable asking them any questions that might arise about the baby's care or condition.