

Frequently Asked Questions: Your stay in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) at CHOC Children's Hospital

Why is my child in the PICU?

The PICU is the section of the hospital that provides sick or injured children with the highest level of medical care. It provides intensive nursing care and continuous monitoring of things like heart rate, breathing and blood pressure.

When will I see my child's doctor?

Your doctor will visit with you and your child daily.

How will I have my questions answered?

Please ask questions of any team member. It is important to us that we hear your concerns and answer all your questions. We also encourage you to take notes to jot down questions as they arise and to record answers. You're also encouraged to use the whiteboard in your child's room to write down your questions.

Can I stay with my child?

Parents and guardians can be with their child at any time except during procedures requiring a sterile environment or during a potential hazardous exposure. Each room has a designated area where one parent can spend the night.

Can we have visitors?

Visiting hours end at 8 p.m. Your nurse will explain visitor guidelines at the time of admission. To protect patients and staff, visitors are temporarily limited to parents and a few surrogate caregivers during the winter viral season.

Can my child leave their room?

It depends on their reason for admission. If their physician clears the child to leave the room, their nurse can help them to the playroom or other amenities. If they must stay in their room, the nurse can help you choose activities to do in their room.

How long until we can go home?

Because each child is different, it's often difficult to predict a length of stay. You are encouraged to participate in daily rounds to receive information, help develop care plans for each day as well as after discharge, and get your questions answered.

How will my child get food while they are staying in the PICU?

We offer room service for our patients staying in the hospital. A menu is located in each patient room. Call the number listed to order food of your choice to be delivered to your room. Orders can be made From 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.