

What is Pediatric Acute Inpatient Rehab?

Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation (also called acute rehab) is a program that helps your child recover from a major injury or illness. Your child may receive occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, education, nursing, and medical treatment. The goal is to help restore function, prevent complications, and teach new skills.

- Acute inpatient rehab is offered in the hospital. The length of your child's stay is determined by their needs, ability to participate in therapy, and ability to progress.
- Acute inpatient rehab focuses on returning your child home.

Why does my child need acute inpatient rehab?

Your child experienced a life-changing event or injury. A period of intense therapy, at least 3 hours per day, can help your child regain the function and independence they will need when they return home, go back to school, and resume life outside the hospital.

There are many unknowns. Each child is unique. They may not be ready for acute inpatient rehab at this time. Acute inpatient rehab is intense. It is a special program with specific requirements.

What if my child is not ready for acute inpatient rehab?

The timing of acute inpatient rehab is important for your child's rehab success. Starting too soon can lead to frustration or sadness. They may need to start at a long-term acute care facility or a skilled nursing facility. This will allow for more time for their healing.

Who is on the Acute Inpatient Rehab Team?

Family: You and your child are the most important part of the team. The rehab team wants you to participate in the care of your child. Your help is important when we set goals and plan their treatment. You will learn new skills that will help you take care of your child at home.

Rehab Doctors: Your child sees a rehab doctor every day. This doctor will oversee the care of your child. Your child also may be seen by a nurse practitioner or a resident. The resident is a doctor who is receiving training in rehab. Other medical specialists will be called in as needed.

Rehab Nurses: Your child is cared for 24 hours a day by a nurse. Nurses will help plan your child's daily activities, provide daily nursing care, and communicate with the rest of the team. Your nurses will teach you about your child's condition and medications, including how to give the medications and side effects to watch out for. The nurse will help you practice the skills you and your child learn in therapy and will help you make plans to care for your child at home.

Physical Therapist (PT): Physical therapy works on movement and the coordination of your child's body. The PT may work on skills such as rolling, sitting, crawling, standing, and walking. Physical therapy may include teaching your child how to move from lying down to sitting up or from sitting down to standing up. The PT will teach you ways to move your child. They will work with you to make sure your child can move around your home safely. The PT can determine if equipment will help your child. Equipment may include braces, wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches.

Occupational Therapist (OT): OTs help your child to become more independent with the activities of daily living. These include dressing, showering, and brushing teeth and hair. Occupational therapy works on the strength and coordination of your child's arms and upper body. OTs may help your child to improve arm strength, hand and finger movement, and eye-hand coordination. OTs prepare your child to return to school. They assist your child with handwriting, problem solving, judgment, and money management. OTs may also provide your child with equipment or tools to help them bathe, dress, or play. They also can help find resources in your community to help prepare your teenager to return to driving.

Speech Language Pathologist (SLP): A speech language pathologist (SLP) can help your child with 3 things: communicating, swallowing, and thinking (also called cognition). Communicating involves speaking clearly, which may be difficult for your child. Your child can learn other methods to communicate their needs and wants. Swallowing safely prevents your child from swallowing liquids into their lungs, which could cause pneumonia.

Cognition includes the ability to talk, read, and write. In cognitive therapy, your child will work on their attention span, memory, organizing, problem-solving, and decision-making. Many kids say that therapy is like school. SLPs often help kids and parents determine what needs a child may have when returning to school. The SLP may recommend a hearing test.

Behavioral Health Practitioner: It is difficult to be sick and in the hospital. Patients in our rehab program have experienced a huge life change. Our psychologists and psychiatrists are experts at helping individuals keep a positive mindset and can address mental health issues that exist or arise during rehab. This help includes finding strategies for coping with treatments, an unknown future, the struggles that come with relearning skills, and a long-term hospital stay. Behavioral health practitioners can help your child return to everyday life with a disability.

Integrative Medicine Practitioner: Integrative medicine is also called complementary medicine. It focuses on the whole child. Treatment options include acupressure, massage therapy, medical aromatherapy, relaxation and breathing techniques, and Shoni-Shin or Tui Na (needleless acupuncture or massage). Let your doctor know if you are interested in exploring integrative medicine treatments.

Social Worker: Social workers help patients and families cope with stress associated with a child receiving care at the hospital. They identify support systems, resources, and other programs families might need. They can assist with communication among patients, families and the medical team, help during a crisis, provide emotional support, and provide short-term counseling. They also are able to connect you with the Intermountain Healthcare financial assistance program.

Case Manager: A case manager is a nurse who organizes your child's care at the hospital. The case manager coordinates care with the patient and family, the rehab team, and insurance companies concerning benefits and authorizations. Your child will need services after leaving the hospital. Before your child goes home, the case manager will help you set up supplies, services, and outpatient therapy appointments.

Child Life Specialists: Child life specialists help patients and families manage the stress that comes with illness, injury, and healthcare. They promote family strength and coping skills, and support your child's healthy growth and development. Child life specialists help by providing play and activities for self-expression, coping support, and comfort management. They provide sibling support and education. Child life specialists are skilled in providing education about diagnoses, treatment, and the healthcare experience in a way your child will understand.

Kids Crew Volunteers: The Kids Crew is a group of volunteers. They are available every day of the week from 9 am – 8 pm. Please call extension 23761 for a Kids Crew volunteer to come play with your child, sit with your child while you take a break, bring a craft activity to your child’s room, or take your child to the playroom.

Dietician: Dieticians will work with the team to establish and monitor your child’s nutritional needs. They also are available for nutritional counseling and education.

Education Specialist: School Services provides year-round instruction while your child is in the hospital. Teachers provide supplies, resource materials, computer access, and tutoring. The education specialist communicates with your child’s school to facilitate the transition back to school. You will need to give the education specialist permission to contact your child’s school. Please share with your education specialist any ideas you may have about your child’s return to school, including what might help make the transition go smoothly. **The School Zone** area on the 3rd floor is used for individual instruction and peer interaction.

Music Therapists: Music therapists use music to provide emotional support. Music can help your child express their feelings. Music therapy addresses socialization, communication, emotions, physical issues, thinking, memory, pain control, and senses. Music therapists also focus on helping your child with individual rehabilitation goals. Music therapy helps to encourage empowerment and self-esteem. Sessions can take place at the bedside, during therapy with a PT, OT, or speech language therapist or in the music therapy space, **Sophie’s Place**.

Art Therapists: Art therapists help your child express themselves through making art. These activities are designed to help your child decrease stress, process their hospital stay, increase confidence, and improve their coping skills. Sometimes art therapy is used to support other rehab goals such as practicing fine motor skills or following directions. All family members are included in making art so it can be a family bonding experience as well. Art therapy is for all patients ages 2 and up.

Dance / Movement Therapists: Movement therapists work along with other team members to improve strength, mobility, and fine motor skills through dance and movement. It gives your child opportunities for choice and control, emotional expression and connection to self and others. Movement therapy is less about dance and more about encouraging patients, and their families and friends, to find joy in movement and expression in their own way and ability.

What do I need to do for my child’s acute inpatient rehab admission?

Insurance Prior Authorization: Rehab is considered an elective benefit. Prior authorization by your insurance company before admission is required. With your permission, the Case Manager will contact your insurance company and obtain prior authorization.

Questions for my doctor