

Let's Talk About...

Cystic Fibrosis Cleanout

What is a cystic fibrosis cleanout?

A cystic fibrosis (CF) cleanout takes place when a child with CF is admitted to the hospital. The child receives antibiotics and respiratory treatments 4 times a day to “clean out” their lungs. There may be other activities in the hospital, such as physical therapy, to improve the child’s overall health.

Why does my child need a CF cleanout?

The goals of a CF cleanout are to improve lung function, decrease lung infection, and improve nutritional status. A CF cleanout may help your child grow and improve nutritional status. Another reason for a CF cleanout is if your child has been fighting frequent infections.

How do I prepare my child for a CF cleanout?

Bring items from home that help your child feel more comfortable in the hospital. Examples include clothes, a pillow, or a special blanket or toy.

In the hospital, your child will have frequent respiratory treatments, receive medicine, and have physical therapy. There will be time for your child to do school work and fun activities. If possible, please talk to your child’s teacher to get the homework.

While in the hospital, your child will use equipment and take medicine provided by the hospital. Some of the respiratory equipment may be different than what you use at home.

What happens when I bring my child to the hospital?

Your child will be admitted to the hospital. The doctor will come to your child’s room and ask questions about medical history and medicines taken.

Your child’s nurse will ask questions to get to know you and your child better and help organize the plan of care.

What else might happen on the first day in the hospital?

The first day in the hospital is busy starting your child’s care. A small tube is placed into your child’s vein. This is either an intravenous catheter (IV) or peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC). Your child will receive antibiotics through the IV or PICC. Your child will have blood drawn for studies. Your child will also have to spit in a container and the spit will be tested. A respiratory therapist (RT) will start giving your child respiratory treatments on the first day.

What about other days in the hospital?

Children in the hospital for a CF cleanout will have a schedule for respiratory therapy, physical therapy, and education time. They will also have some free time throughout their stay in the hospital. Child Life Specialists can help your child with activities and games to keep them busy during this free time.

When can my child go home?

Your child will spend about 2 weeks in the hospital for the CF cleanout. The doctor will decide when your child can go home.

Who are the healthcare team members that will help my child?

Many people will be involved in your child’s care while in the hospital. This includes doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, respiratory therapists, social workers, dietitians, child life specialists, physical therapists, and educators.

Social workers can provide resources and educators can help with school issues and homework. Child life specialists can help prepare your child for procedures and provide fun activities. Volunteers or other staff can spend time with your child if you need to leave your child's room or go home.

Does my child have to stay in the hospital room?

All CF patients are in isolation. Your child is allowed to go to the physical therapy gym if approved by the physical therapist. Children with CF are not allowed to go to the playroom or cafeteria. Your child may be allowed to leave the room daily for a walk supervised by an adult family member or a hospital staff member. If your child is not allowed to leave the hospital room, a physical therapist will come to your child's room for therapy. Your child must wear a mask outside of the hospital room. Frequent hand hygiene is encouraged.

Nutrition

It is important that your child eats high protein foods that are high in calories. Please order plenty of high calorie, high protein food with the room service menu. The staff will monitor your child's nutrition status. They will write down all the food your child eats for the first 3 days while in the hospital. This is called a "calorie count." The dietitians (experts in food and nutrition) can tell from this information if your child eats the right food. Your child is weighed frequently to see if your child gains weight correctly.

Will we receive training about CF while my child is in the hospital?

While your child is in the hospital, you and your child will learn more about CF. Your child's healthcare professionals will give you information about CF and answer your questions. Please fill out the needs assessment form. This helps your child's nurses know the topics you would like more information about.

What are cystic fibrosis (CF) rounds?

CF Rounds are a time in the hospital when you can talk with the healthcare team. Healthcare professionals from the CF clinic and the inpatient unit will be at CF Rounds each Wednesday. During CF Rounds you can ask questions and discuss concerns about being in the hospital and concerns about going home.

What about exercise?

While in the hospital, your child will exercise with a physical therapist. The physical therapist will meet with you and your child to go over an exercise plan. Exercise will happen once a day, Monday through Friday.

What if I have more questions?

If you have more questions please ask your child's nurse or doctor.