

Helping Your Child Cope With a Medical Condition

Your child's chronic illness can be difficult, frustrating and frightening. Here are a few suggestions that can help.

What can you do?

- Clarify your child's restrictions, triggers and dangers with the medical team.
 - Explain them again to your child in language they can understand.
- Empathize with your child's struggles.
 - "It IS tough taking these medications every day!"
 - "I don't BLAME you for being mad or angry that you can't eat the pizza! I would be, too!"
- Develop illness action plans for trusted adults to follow, such as grandparents, babysitters and school staff.
- Reward your child for daily cooperation with health and medical management tasks or for taking age-appropriate responsibilities.
- Make sure to TAKE A PARENTS' BREAK. In order to give your child help, you must make sure to give yourself time as well.
- Give your child outlets to correctly express feelings.
 - Carve out a special time each day to talk with your child.
 - Provide your child with a journal to record feelings.
 - Develop a "feelings corner" at home for hitting a punching bag, ripping newspapers and yelling into a pillow.

When should you seek professional help?

There may be many appropriate times to seek help, including after your child receives a new medical diagnosis; if you as parents feel overwhelmed, tired or in conflict; or if you observe the following behaviors in your child:

- A change in mood and behavior
- School problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Intensified sibling conflict
- A lack of cooperation with medical management
- Increasing social withdrawal

What can you expect from a visit with Pediatric Behavioral Health?

- An in-depth exploration of your child's illness and its medical and emotional impact on all family members.
- Solutions for managing and coping with the illness, such as ways to improve medication adherence.
- To learn specific techniques, such as biofeedback, relaxation techniques and cognitive behavioral techniques.
- To learn healthy ways for your child to appropriately express strong emotions about his or her illness/condition.
- Follow-up behavioral health sessions, if needed, for individuals and family as well as play therapy.
- School consultations

Most insurance, including Medicaid, are accepted

Call 303.398.1260 to make an appointment with one of our experienced psychologists, social workers or art therapists, or visit us online at njhealth.org/pediatric-behavior.

**To schedule an appointment with our
Pediatric Behavioral Health Specialists
call 303.398.1260**