

What to expect during your child's stay



Grace Grego Maxwell Mental Health Unit
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Welcome

Welcome to the Mental Health Unit (MHU) at Dell Children’s Medical Center (DCMC). We know that placing your child in hospital psychiatric care can be very stressful for your family, and we are grateful for the trust you are placing in us to care for your child or teen.

We believe that youth are incredibly strong, and have many strengths that we can draw upon to help them in their healing. The way we care for children recognizes that many who come to us have had some sort of trauma in their lives, and we are mindful of how that trauma can shape their thinking and behavior. Our goal is to help kids to be able to better manage their emotions, allowing them to make better choices about their behavior.

Both you and your child are very important parts of the care team, and we will work together to develop a care plan that is best for you both. It is our job to listen to you, learn from you, and help you and your family meet your goals.

We have a team of dedicated staff to help you every step of the way.



Meet the team

Child and adolescent psychiatrist

A child psychiatrist is a doctor who cares for children with mental health disorders. This doctor will assess your child's mental and physical health every day. This doctor can prescribe medications if needed. A resident psychiatrist, fellow, and/or medical student may also work with your child.

Social worker

A social worker will be the main contact for you and your child. The social worker will talk to you about your child's care, and help set up appointments for follow-up in the community. You and your child will work with the social worker to create a safe plan to go home.

Clinical pharmacist

The clinical pharmacist has special training and certification to assess the medication needs of children with mental health disorders. This person will monitor your child's medications for safety and effectiveness, and provide medication education to help them feel they are an active part of in the decision-making about their care.

Child and adolescent psychologist

A psychologist is a team member with a doctorate degree and special training in therapy and psychological testing of children and adolescents. The psychologist helps with your child's care, and may meet with them individually or in groups throughout their stay.

Registered nurse

A registered nurse (RN) who specializes in mental health, emotional and behavioral issues will assess and monitor your child's treatment progress. An RN will give any prescribed medications and monitor for side effects as well as provide education about mental health issues, treatment and coping strategies, and provide emotional support to patients. An RN also maintains a safe and therapeutic environment for patients, and implements measures to prevent self-harm, suicide and other dangerous behaviors. You can call the nurse anytime to ask questions about your child's care at [512-324-0505](tel:512-324-0505).

Psychiatric nurse practitioner

A nurse practitioner is an RN with advanced training (either master's or doctorate degree) in diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders. The nurse practitioner and the doctor both provide psychiatric evaluation and management services, including prescribing medication if indicated. Though the two roles have different backgrounds and training, they collaborate closely with each other throughout your child's hospital stay. If there is a nurse practitioner involved in your child's care, they will see your child regularly in collaboration with a child psychiatrist to assess their physical and mental health needs.

Behavioral health technician (BHT)

BHTs are our direct care staff who are with the patients all the time. They lead activities on the unit, work with patients, and create a safe and therapeutic environment for your child to begin to recover.

Expressive therapist

An expressive therapist uses art, music, drama and movement as part of your child's treatment.

In addition, your child will have access to medical providers if needed, including pediatricians, specialists, registered dietitians, and physical therapists. These additional staff members work with your child's mental healthcare team to give the best care possible.

Our staff is here to help

Your child will have a team of doctors, nurses and other staff members to care for them. This team will meet every day to talk about your child's treatment, progress, and when your child may be ready to go home.

Staff are on the unit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We check on patients throughout the day and night to help keep them safe.

Admissions process



We will set up a meeting between you and the care team to get information about your child's history; identify goals for care; and get permission for treatment and medication. We value what is important to you and your family, and want to make sure that the goals for treatment reflect what your child needs.

Please remember that we are an acute care unit, which means children tend not to stay with us very long. An average stay can be between 4-7 days, but the amount of time in the hospital will be determined by what is best for your child.

We can help you identify immediate goals for treatment, as well as goals that can be worked on once your child is discharged home. Throughout this admission process, we are here to answer any questions you might have about your child's stay.

Your child's safety is a priority for us and to help make sure we can keep them safe, all belongings will be searched by staff prior to going onto the unit. We want your child to have items from home that are comforting, but we request that you limit these to what we have on our list (Please refer to insert for suggested packing list).

Please know we will do our best to keep up with any personal items, but we have common spaces in our unit and occasionally things do get picked up by other kids, so keep this in mind. You will also notice that we have safety protocols in place when you come to visit. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns; we are happy to talk further with you, so you feel as comfortable as possible.



All belongings will be searched and secured by staff. You will be asked to take home any belongings not permitted on the unit for safety reasons. We ask that you do not bring any items of clothing that have drawstrings or ties (such as shorts, hoodies, etc.) — unless you are able to remove the strings. Please bring only what is necessary for clothing, as we have limited storage space and your child will have access to a washer and dryer. As a suggestion, you can bring 3-5 shirts; 2-4 pairs of pants/shorts; 5-6 pairs of undergarments and socks; and two sets of pajamas. Keeping the amount of clothing to a minimum will help ensure these are not lost while your child is here.

We do not allow electronic items on the units, such as laptops or cell phones. We do have headphones available for use because we know listening to music is an important coping skill for many children.

In addition, all patients will receive a skin check by a nurse and another clinical staff member prior to entering the unit. A skin check will allow our staff to assess your child for any injuries prior to coming onto our unit. We will be sensitive to any trauma in your child's history to make them feel safe and maintain their dignity throughout this process. You may remain in the room during this time if you and your child wish for you to.



It is important to remember that your child is being admitted to a unit where they will be around other children struggling with similar issues. Everyone is in a different place in their recovery journey and has different treatment needs. Our program uses a lot of group therapy, and we encourage them to learn from one another. As a result, patients often form bonds with each other while they are here, and we do not want these relationships to become a distraction to their treatment. Please know that we actively discourage the sharing of any personal information among our patients, but we cannot guarantee this will not happen. Please help us out by talking to your child about the importance of keeping their personal information, including social media contacts, private.

Our staff receives training in trauma-informed care and Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), and makes every effort to proactively engage with our patients to prevent situations from escalating. There may be times, however, when a child becomes so upset and does not respond to these efforts. When there is an immediate safety risk to the patient or to others, our staff is trained to use restraint/seclusion interventions as an absolute last resort. Our goal is to not use restraints or seclusions, but you will be notified immediately if one is needed for your child.

Suggested packing list

Things to bring:

Clothes*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts (3-5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pants (2-4) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts (2-3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear (5-6) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socks (2-4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweatshirt (1-2) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports bra/bra (3-4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Slides/Crocs/slippers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas (2-3 sets) | |

**Pack comfortable clothes and we will provide hospital socks for your child during their stay.*

Comfort items

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket/pillow | <input type="checkbox"/> Stuffed animal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures (no frame) |

Toiletries

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo/conditioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Hair products |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hair brush | <input type="checkbox"/> Facial cleanser |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moisturizer | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush/toothpaste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant | |

Things to leave at home

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Clothes with strings or laces | • Products in glass containers |
| • Aerosol deodorants | • Belts |
| • Spiral notebooks | • Glass/ceramic objects |
| • Electronics | • Dental floss |
| • Pens/pencils | • Shaving razors |
| • Electric toothbrushes | |

Care team meetings

Within a day of your admission, your child's psychiatrist or nurse practitioner will contact you to learn more about your child and answer any questions you might have about medications and overall care. The psychiatrist will meet with your child daily to see how they are progressing.

One of our hospital pediatricians will do a physical exam on your child and review routine labs when they are admitted. If there are any medical issues that need care, such as diabetes, our medical staff will follow up with your child while your child is in the hospital.

One of our social workers will set up a family meeting with you and your child shortly after admission. This is a time for you and your child to begin to handle any concerns that may have led up to hospital admission, and develop a safety plan for returning home.



Visiting your child

Visitation is subject to change during fall/winter seasons. Only parents, primary caregivers and siblings can visit. No one under the age of 18 can be by themselves in the waiting room or by themselves visiting the patient. Four visitors are allowed at a time. Due to space limitations, you will be assigned a specific time for visitation and we ask that your visits be limited to 30 minutes. These visits are limited so that your child can maximize their time receiving treatment on the unit. If there is any need for a longer visitation, please plan to talk with your assigned treatment team about this request. We want to make sure everyone has a chance to visit with their families while they are here.

Phone calls

We do not have any set times for phone calls. We try to let the children make or get calls whenever possible, and do not want these to get in the way of their care. Please try not to call between 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m., if possible. Children go to bed around 9 p.m. and we try to have calls finished by then, so they can get the rest they need. You can call and speak to a nurse at any time, day or night. We will share information about your child and their progress only with you or those you have given permission to. Your child's safety is our number-one priority, and we appreciate your understanding with these guidelines.

Sample daily schedule

Your child will attend groups and unit activities with other patients their age.

7:30 a.m.	Wake-up/vital signs/hygiene
8:30 a.m.	Community meeting/goal setting
8:55 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 a.m.	Expressive therapy group
10:30 a.m.	Social work therapy group
11:15 a.m.	Check-in/snack
11:30 a.m.	Specialty group
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m.	Phone time
1:30 p.m.	Social work therapy group
2:30 p.m.	Expressive therapy group
3:30 p.m.	Check-in/snack
3:45 p.m.	Recreation therapy
4:45 p.m.	Outside time
5:15 p.m.	Dinner
5:30 p.m.	TV time
6 p.m.	Phone time/visitation
6:30 p.m.	TV time
7:30 p.m.	Check-in/snack
7:45 p.m.	Evening activity
8:30 p.m.	Community meeting
9 p.m.	Hygiene
10 p.m.	Lights out

Unit activities and therapy

Groups will teach your child new ways to cope with depression, anxiety, stress and conflict. There are separate groups for children (ages 6-12) and adolescents (ages 13-17).

Community meetings are held on the unit at the start and end of each day. This is where children set goals for the day; check in about how they are feeling; and give feedback to each other to create a positive social environment.



Group therapy

Coping Skills

Your child will learn problem-solving skills and how to cope with stress.

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

Your child will learn skills to help cope with intense emotions.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Your child will learn how changing negative thoughts can change feelings and behaviors.

Expressive Therapy

Your child will learn to manage stress through art, music, writing and movement groups.

Other group topics could include but are not limited to information about medications; spirituality, relationships, safety and social media; sleep, hygiene and healthy eating.



Patient rooms



Your child will sleep in a patient room on the unit that has its own bathroom. These rooms are different from regular hospital rooms, and allow for each child to have a roommate. Roommates will be placed with safety and security in mind. Please speak to a staff member if you have concerns about your child sharing a room.

Please note that our unit is not set up for parents to be able to spend the night with their child. We know that this can be a hard separation, and we will do everything we can to answer any questions or handle any concerns you have.

Recreation



We know the importance of play and fun for children while they are in the hospital. If the weather is good, they will spend time outdoors daily with our nurses and/or behavioral health technicians. We have a covered area with tables, a basketball court, and raised gardens where we grow seasonal vegetables and herbs. The staff will also lead many fun activities during the day to help your child feel comfortable and interact in a positive way with others. We have many games and books for children and teens, and they can watch G- and PG-rated movies. Because we know children are dealing with different types of stress, we also have many sensory items, including fidget toys, weighted blankets, and noise-canceling headphones. We want to help your child be better able to cope with the day-to-day challenges of life, and manage their emotional reactions.

Meal time

Your child can choose from many options for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Our kitchen can meet a variety of dietary needs including gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian and dairy-sensitive. In addition, healthy snacks and drinks are always available on the unit.

Sample menu

<p><i>Breakfast</i></p> <p>(*Served with two sides)</p> <p>Scrambled eggs Pancakes Cheese omelet Breakfast tacos (2) Oatmeal</p> <p><i>Sides</i></p> <p>Bacon Sausage Hash browns Muffins Toast Biscuit Yogurt Fresh fruit</p> <p><i>Drinks</i></p> <p>Orange juice Apple juice Milk Water Tea</p>	<p><i>Dinner</i></p> <p>Turkey and cheese sandwich or Peanut butter and jelly and chips Chef salad with ranch, Italian or Caesar dressing Grilled chicken Caesar salad Baked fish sticks and steamed broccoli Spaghetti and meatballs with marinara and breadstick Soft beef tacos, rice and beans</p> <p><i>Grill</i></p> <p>Hamburger Cheeseburger Veggie burger Grilled chicken sandwich Chicken tenders Cheese or pepperoni pizza Grilled cheese, hot dog (Served with French fries or later tots) *Grill options available lunch and dinner</p> <p><i>Drinks</i></p> <p>Coke Sprite Apple juice Milk Water Tea</p> <p><i>Desserts</i></p> <p>Cookie Brownie</p>
<p>Patient name: _____</p> <p>DOB: _____</p> <p>Diet: _____</p> <p>Allergy restrictions: _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Patient name: _____</p> <p>DOB: _____</p> <p>Diet: _____</p> <p>Allergy restrictions: _____</p> <p>_____</p>

Discharge planning

Before going home, you and your child will meet with a social worker to make a safety plan and determine follow-up care needs. Our team will provide resources and/or assist with making appointments with an outpatient psychiatrist and/or therapist.



All patients are given a 30-day prescription for medications, and we work to ensure your child has a follow-up appointment during that time. Call **512-324-0029** if you have any questions or problems with your child's plan for going home.

Some final thoughts

We value your input and believe your child will get the best care when we partner together. Reach out to us at any time to get information, ask questions, or provide feedback about how we are doing. Upon going home, please take the time to fill out a survey about how we did. This helps us make our services better. You may also get a call from one of our team members a few days after your child leaves. Please give us your thoughts about your child's stay, and let us know of anything we could do better.

Please be aware that shortly after your child goes home, your child's chart is sent to our medical records department. You may reach that department at **512-324-0180** if you would like a copy of those records.

We want to thank you again for allowing us to take care of your child.



**To learn more, visit ascension.org
or call 512-324-0029**

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