

## Dealing with Your Child's Medical Emergency

Traumatic stress symptoms are common after a serious illness or injury, and the entire family can be affected.

### You are the best person to help your child.

- Be calm and reassuring. Hold his or her hand, use distractions like a story or game.
- If needed, set rules and limits like you would at home.

### Help your child understand what is happening.

- Encourage your child to ask them questions.
- Help the healthcare team explain things so your child can understand.
- Be honest but reassuring about what will happen. ("This will hurt now, but it will help you get better.")

### Allow your child to talk about worries or feelings.

### Take care of yourself.

- Get support when you are worried or upset.
- Remember to eat and sleep!
- Ask for help from family and friends.

This project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

## Helping Your Child Cope after the Hospital

### Go back to everyday routines.

- Normal routines help children feel safe.
- Help your child go back to usual activities as much as she or he can.

### Set normal limits on behavior.

- Keep most of your family rules and expectations.

### Encourage your child to spend time with his or her friends.

- Some children will worry about how their friends will react.
- Help your child answer friends' questions: Is it contagious? Does it hurt?

### Follow up with the doctor or clinic.

#### Where to Get Additional Help

Sidran Institute Help Line [help@sidran.org](mailto:help@sidran.org), 410-825-8888 (9-5 EST)  
Idaho State University Institute of Rural Health [www.isu.edu/irh/crisis.htm](http://www.isu.edu/irh/crisis.htm)

 **NCTSN** The National Child Traumatic Stress Network *Developed by the Rural Consortium and the Medical Traumatic Stress Working Group of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.*  
[www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)