

## *Preparing For Hospital – May 2006 Newsletter*

Going into hospital can be a daunting time for anyone but a little bit of background knowledge and information before hand can go a great deal to help ease those nerves. My eldest daughter, Emily (now four), recently had a 're-repair' on her palate just before Christmas and as this was going to be her first operation at PMH, (her last was back in the UK), I felt I had to find out more about what her and my stay would be like.

### **Home Preparation**

My Emily loves to dress up so when I bought her a little nurse's outfit she was ecstatic. She wore her outfit to the ward visit and this made her feel very special as everyone she met commented on how wonderful she looked and when was she starting work? She also wore it on the day of her operation and most of the time spent in the hospital (so it was money well spent). The outfit helped with role play with poor mum being the patient and Emily being the adoring nurse!



I also found some books about hospital visits that Emily loved and I found useful in discussing with Emily what would happen to her. Some of the books we especially liked were:

'Miffy in the Hospital' by Dick Bruna – An old favourite and a reassuringly recognisable character in Miffy. Shows how Miffy is feeling and is made to feel special by the nurse and her mum and dad.

'I Don't Want to go to Hospital' by Tony Ross – This is a story about a demanding Little Princess who doesn't want to go to hospital. Eventually she does and loves it as she is treated like a princess. A delightful light hearted story which my little Princess Emily loved!

'Going to the hospital' by Usborne First Experiences – This book follows the story of a little boy who goes into hospital for an operation on his ear. The pictures detail the children's ward, meeting the nurse and surgeon, being unable to eat before the operation and his recovery afterwards. There is lots going on, on each page and even though the boy feels sore after, the friends visits, presents and cards make up for it.

### **Visit the Ward**

I arranged a visit with the Ward for Emily and myself about a week before her operation. Any earlier than that I thought would unduly worry her. One of the nurses showed us where Emily would sleep and introduced us to the play coordinator, who

Emily was delighted to meet! So they have plenty of toys, books, puzzles and crafts to keep the patients busy. There is also a video player on the ward and a choice of videos for the kids.



We were shown the toilets, bath and showers. They have towels there for both parent and child to use. By the way they do have a hairdryer you can borrow on the ward – just ask! Also, anything electrical you bring in has to be tested by the hospital's safety department before you can use it.

There is a kitchen on the ward with tea and coffee making facilities. They have a fridge where you can leave food in – just make sure it's labelled. I took in lots of yogurts for Emily because of the nature of her operation solid food was out for a few weeks!

For any breastfeeding mums it is handy to know they have an electric breastpump on the ward – again just ask one of the nurses to borrow it.

### **At the Hospital**

At our Ward visit we were shown where the Friendship Room was located. This is the room where you can wait whilst your child is in surgery. It is run by WRVS and when we were there we were fed tea and biscuits by two lovely ladies. There is an outside area if you need some fresh air. There are toys for the little ones to play with as well as magazines and papers for the adults.

When Emily's surgery was over and she had come round the nurse phoned the Friendship Room and one of the lovely ladies took my husband in to help wheel Emily back to her bed.

The WRVS also come around the Ward each day with a trolley full of goodies and there is also their shop on the ground floor. Emily would recommend the helium balloons – the ladies even refill them for you on a return visit!

The best place of all in the hospital – according to my Emily – is the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor where the Starlight Room and Megazone is located. Our next newsletter will feature these exciting places but suffice to say that Emily didn't want to leave the hospital after attending the Megazones Christmas Party. She cried when the Doctor said she could go home she loved her stay on the Ward and the Megazone that much – now nothing could have prepared me for her wanting to stay!