

POWER OF KNOWING

An educational resource for patients and families.

USING MEDICAL PLAY AT HOME

The unknown is often scarier than the known

Children learn through play and you might often hear “play is a child’s work”. Allowing children to play doctor or nurse at home can help children gain a better understanding, identify challenges and find ways to improve the experience of future medical events.

What is Medical Play?

Medical play is a play experience that has a medical focus. It uses real or toy medical equipment and often a doll or a stuffed animal. It is guided by the child.

Benefits of medical play at home:

- Allows communication between you and your child about medical care. It is important to be honest and simple in explaining medical events.
- Increases understanding and familiarity with medical events.
- Allows the expression of feelings. It is important to acknowledge feelings that may come up and discuss ways to get through challenges.
- Allows us to clear up ideas children have that are confusing or false.
- Increases a sense of control. Children often feel a loss of control with medical care as some aspects of care are not choices for them. During this play children can be in charge.

Helpful Tips:

- Allow your child to direct the play. Some children may not want to play at first so set aside and introduce materials another time.
- Try not to ask too many question. Listen.
- Clear up confusion or false ideas. If your child says, “my patient is being naughty and needs a shot”, you can help by saying “we need vaccines to keep us from getting sick” or “sometimes doctors need a little blood to learn more about our body, our body makes new blood all the time”.
- Always supervise the play. If it becomes unsafe or seems to be used to punish, clear up misconception and direct to something else.

Child Life Services

A child life specialist uses play with real and pretend medical equipment to help children understand and be involved in their care. To schedule services please email: khchildlife@fakeeh.care.

Creative Ideas

Create your own
doctor’s kit

Art masterpiece using
medical supplies

Paint using syringes



Hide and Seek using
pictures or medical
supplies



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