

SEPTEMBER 2016

## Securing your personal belongings

**Y**ou have a lot of things on your mind – your sick child, your family, appointments, medicine schedules and much more. It is easy to forget about personal items and accidentally leave them in common areas of the hospital – a purse, a wallet, a cell phone, a personal video game player or another important item.

Before bringing any personal items to the hospital, please mark them with your name and phone number or the patient's full name, so we will be able to reach you if one of your items is found. Use a Sharpie® pen or write the information on a piece of tape and place it on the item.

It is important for all St. Jude patient families to keep their personal belongings secure. Consider leaving valuables and important paperwork in your St. Jude housing room. Tri Delta Place offers a small safe in every room. When staying in Target House or Ronald McDonald House, your possessions will be safe and secure

as long as you keep your front door locked.

Do not leave your personal items (laptops, purses, luggage, etc.) unattended in common areas of the hospital or housing facilities.

The housing directors remind all families to keep their room keys with them at all times. If you lose a set of keys, tell the housing staff right away, so they can take action to protect you and your belongings.

If you have a vehicle on the hospital or housing grounds, remember to keep the doors locked at all times. Do not leave personal items in your vehicle.

If you lose a personal item while in the hospital, check with Patient Services on the Patient Care Center plaza level and check with Security.

We encourage you to call the St. Jude Security staff if you think your possessions have been lost or stolen. To reach Security from a hospital phone, dial 4444. If using a cell

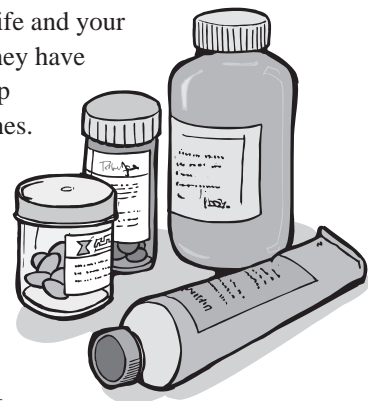
phone, call 901-595-4444. Always be aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activity or anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Security officers are on campus and in the hospital 24 hours a day to serve you.

## Need help getting your child to take medicines by mouth?

Some medicines taken by mouth don't taste good, and you might have a hard time getting your child to swallow them. Child Life and your clinic staff can help. They have methods that might help your child take medicines.

Child Life can work with the doctor and pharmacist to find the best ways to help your child take medicine by mouth without causing problems with the treatment plan (protocol).

Keep in mind that some medicines cannot be mixed with food or drink and some cannot be taken with food. Some tablets should not be crushed, and some capsules should not be opened. Always talk to your nurse, doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about a certain medicine.



## What face mask can my child wear?

Are all face masks the same? The answer is no. Masks have many different levels of protection based on why they are being used. If your child has low blood counts (neutropenic), an N-95 mask should be worn, like the white "duck-bill" mask that St. Jude provides.

Although masks that you can purchase may be more stylish, they do not provide your child with the best protection from airborne

germs (mold and bacteria) and should not be used. The N-95 mask is important to help protect your child from germs and mold particles.

Staff members have noticed that some parents have been ordering their own masks for color, comfort or style. We understand that your child wears the mask for a long time every day, and you may prefer a different mask. But keep in mind that as a

team we want to make sure you are protecting your child's health as well as possible with the mask choice you make.

You can simply use the white "duck bill" masks provided at St. Jude.



However, if you choose to order special masks, please talk with your doctor or nurse first to make sure that the masks you choose do provide N-95 air filtration protection for your child.

To get the best protection, change the N-95 face mask when wet, soiled or after one week of use. Handmade cloth masks do not provide any filtration protection from germs or mold.

## Coffee Talk for parents

Parents: Please join members of the St. Jude Family Advisory Council for coffee and conversation.

All St. Jude parents and caregivers are invited. Coffee Talk is a chance for parents to talk in a casual setting and meet other St. Jude parents. Sometimes ideas voiced in Coffee Talk sessions can improve patient care at St. Jude, but most importantly, these sessions help families share their experiences with each other.

**Upcoming Coffee Talk sessions:**  
Thursday, September 15, 8:30–10:30 a.m., Chili's Care Center Lobby  
Thursday, October 20, 5–7 p.m., Tri Delta Place Family Room



## Talking about Medicines

### Keeping up with your child's medicines

By Shane Cross, PharmD, Pharmaceutical Services

How many times have you looked at your child's medicines and said, "How am I going to keep up with this?!" Whether your child is taking two medicines or 10, keeping up with it all can become confusing.

Some doses must be given multiple times in a day or only on specific days of the week. Some drugs need to be taken with food, and others on an empty stomach. Although it can be hard to stay organized, giving medicines as prescribed by the doctor is critical for your child's health and safety.

There are many ways to keep up with your child's medicine schedule.

**Technology can be your friend.** Most cell phones allow you to set one or several alarms. You can use these to help you remember when your child's medicines are due. Some watches also have alarms that can be set to remind you of important medicine doses.

If technology isn't an option, a **paper medicine chart** works well for some parents. List the medicines by the time of day they should be taken as well as by days of the week or even by meal times. With a paper chart, you check the box next to each dose as it is given. To help your child feel a part of the process, have the child place a sticker on the check box when a dose is taken. Be sure to post the chart where the whole family can see it or carry it with you to keep it handy. If you need help setting up a paper schedule, your clinical pharmacist can show you examples of these and help you get started.

**Pill boxes** are another great tool that allows you to organize medicines by days of the week or times of day. At the beginning of the week, place all the meds into the pill box. When it is time to give your child a dose, find the right day and time on the pill box. While helping you remember doses, pill boxes also serve as good storage spaces for some medicines. If you want to try a pill box, ask for one in the Pharmacy or in your child's clinic.

Remember, St. Jude staff members are always willing to help you find the best system for keeping up with your child's medicines. If you have questions about your child's medicines or about ways to keep up with a medicine schedule, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

## Teen Art Show September 21

Child Life will host the annual St. Jude Teen Art Show Wednesday, September 21, from 1:30–3:30 p.m. in the Kay Kafe Rotunda.

The words *strength, practice, challenge, triumph, determination* and *endurance* are all buzz words used to describe athletes and their approach to the Olympic games. This year through their artwork, our teen patients and siblings can attribute these same words to everyday life as well as medical treatment.

Come support St. Jude teens and their art show. Light snacks will be served.

**Have you registered for the online patient portal, called *My St. Jude*? Visit [www.stjude.org/mystjude](http://www.stjude.org/mystjude) for details.**



*St. Jude Parents* is published on the first of each month by Family-Centered Care Services and Biomedical Communications. Your questions and comments are important to us. **We want to print advice and tips from St. Jude parents to other St. Jude parents.**

To share your ideas or to receive this newsletter by email, please call or email Alicia Huettel, RN, MSN, at 901-595-5453 ([parents\\_newsletter@stjude.org](mailto:parents_newsletter@stjude.org)) or Lois Young ([lois.young@stjude.org](mailto:lois.young@stjude.org)). To subscribe to an online version of this newsletter or to learn more about *St. Jude Parents*, visit [www.stjude.org/parents-newsletter](http://www.stjude.org/parents-newsletter).

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