

## Helping Your Child Cope With a Medical Condition

Your child's chronic illness can be difficult, frustrating and frightening. Here are a few suggestions that can help.

### What can you do?

- Clarify your child's restrictions, triggers and dangers with the medical team.
  - Explain them again to your child in language they can understand.
- Empathize with your child's struggles.
  - "It IS tough taking these medications every day!"
  - "I don't BLAME you for being mad or angry that you can't eat the pizza! I would be, too!"
- Develop illness action plans for trusted adults to follow, such as grandparents, babysitters and school staff.
- Reward your child for daily cooperation with health and medical management tasks or for taking age-appropriate responsibilities.
- Make sure to TAKE A PARENTS' BREAK. In order to give your child help, you must make sure to give yourself time as well.
- Give your child outlets to correctly express feelings.
  - Carve out a special time each day to talk with your child.
  - Provide your child with a journal to record feelings.
  - Develop a "feelings corner" at home for hitting a punching bag, ripping newspapers and yelling into a pillow.

### When should you seek professional help?

There may be many appropriate times to seek help, including after your child receives a new medical diagnosis; if you as parents feel overwhelmed, tired or in conflict; or if you observe the following behaviors in your child:

- A change in mood and behavior
- School problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Intensified sibling conflict
- A lack of cooperation with medical management
- Increasing social withdrawal

### What can you expect from a visit with Pediatric Behavioral Health?

- An in-depth exploration of your child's illness and its medical and emotional impact on all family members.
- Solutions for managing and coping with the illness, such as ways to improve medication adherence.
- To learn specific techniques, such as biofeedback, relaxation techniques and cognitive behavioral techniques.
- To learn healthy ways for your child to appropriately express strong emotions about his or her illness/condition.
- Follow-up behavioral health sessions, if needed, for individuals and family as well as play therapy.
- School consultations

Most insurance, including Medicaid, are accepted

**Call 303.398.1260 to make an appointment with one of our experienced psychologists, social workers or art therapists, or visit us online at [njhealth.org/pediatric-behavior](http://njhealth.org/pediatric-behavior).**

**To schedule an appointment with our  
Pediatric Behavioral Health Specialists  
call 303.398.1260**