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Web Exclusive: Helpful Advice

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Parents can help ease the transition from school to clinic and back again. Here are a few tips to follow:

- > Give the teacher, counselors, and school administrators written information detailing dates of appointments, potential side effects of treatment, and long-term effects. This will help keep them in the loop and know what to expect. Ask your child's medical team, which may include a nurse or social worker, for any school-related information they can provide.
- > Offer age-appropriate materials to your child's teacher to help classmates learn about cancer. It will also help teachers and administrators answer students' questions about the illness.
- > Explain the potential side effects of your child's treatment, even those that may persist after treatment has ended, such as fatigue and cognitive dysfunction.
- > Talk frequently with the teacher to see if there are any changes in your child's performance or attitude. If so, you may need to talk with the medical team and school administrators to help develop accommodations to help your child succeed in school. Those accommodations can include allowing extra time to work on assignments or leaving class a few minutes early.
- > Many large school districts offer home-bound teachers to a child expected to be out for an extended period of time. Home-bound teachers can travel to the child's house to tutor and drop off assignments.
- > Ask if there is any technology available that might help the child keep up with classes, such as using web cams, e-mail, and online tests or discussions. This is especially helpful if the child is well enough to participate in class but may not be able to be around crowds due to risk of infection.
- > Most schools will allow children with illnesses special privileges, such as hats, snacks and drinks, and personal hall passes, but it's always helpful to make clear that they will be available to your child.
- > Talk with the school nurse and administrators about any medications the child may need to take during school hours. Be sure to have your child's doctor fill out the appropriate forms for the school, including the name of the drug and when it needs to be administered.
- > If needed, tell school administrators, including the school nurse, that you need to be notified if a classmate of your child becomes ill with a contagious disease, such as the flu or chicken pox, as it could be harmful to your child.

