



Can I bring my service animal to Boston Children's Hospital?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Boston Children's Hospital welcomes the use of service animals by any person with a disability. We do not allow service animals in areas of the hospital where they would cause a major change to hospital operations or a threat to the safety of others or the hospital.

- **Disability**, as defined in the ADA, is any physical or mental impairment that limits 1 or more major life activities, such as breathing, hearing or caring for oneself.
- **Service animal**, as defined in the ADA, is any dog that is trained to do work or tasks for the person with a disability. Disabilities can include physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disabilities. A service animal is not a pet because it is specially trained to help a person overcome the limitations caused by the disability.

Can I bring my comfort or emotional support animal to the hospital?

- No. According to the ADA, comfort or emotional support animals are not considered service animals.
- Service animals **receive special training** to do specific tasks that a person may not be able to do because of their disability.
- The ADA does not consider the sense of companionship, comfort or security that animals may provide a "trained task."

Do I have to provide identification or information about my service animal?

No. Boston Children's does not require information about a person's disability or proof of the service animal's training.

- If a staff member is not sure that an animal is a service animal, you may be asked:
 - Is the animal a service animal

- What tasks/services have the animal been trained to perform
- A staff member should not ask a person about his or her disability.

What are my responsibilities?

- You are responsible for the care and behavior of your service animal at all times. If you have to go to an area that is off-limits to service animals (see next page), you will need to make other plans for the animal during this time. Hospital employees may not take care of a service animal at any time.
- Hospital employees and patients (other than the owner) may not pet or play with your service animal.
- Service animals should not be exposed to any patient's open area of skin (for example: cuts, surgical wounds, area around a drainage tube, etc.)
- Everyone, including the dog's owner, should wash their hands with a waterless alcohol product (like Purell) or soap and water after touching the service animal, its equipment or any other item the dog has touched.
- You should not bring your service animal into the hospital if the dog is sick, has diarrhea (loose poop), fleas, ticks or sores. If your dog shows any signs of poor health or is not house-trained, you may be asked to remove the dog from the hospital.
- You should be able to control your service animal at all times. You may be asked to remove the dog from the hospital if it is out of control (for example: uncontrolled barking, not able to follow your instructions).
- You should report any incidents, such as bites or scratches, to a hospital staff member. If your service animal bites, you will be asked to remove the dog from the hospital right away.

Where is my service animal allowed in the hospital?

You may bring the service animal to any area of the hospital where the general public is allowed. Service animals are not allowed in:

- Areas where the hospital must take special steps to reduce the risk of infection, including:
 - Operating rooms (ORs)
 - Rooms or units (such as transplant or oncology units) that require special air quality for patients at a high risk for infection
 - Intensive care units (ICUs) or other restricted units
 - Pharmacy and central processing areas
- Areas where visitors must take special steps (called precautions) to reduce the risk of infection (wearing gown, gloves, masks or other protective equipment)

Visitors with service animals may not be allowed if:

- The patient is in an ICU or other restricted unit
- The patient is on isolation precautions
- The patient or roommate is at high risk for infection
- The patient or roommate has an allergy to dogs or a severe phobia (very scared)
- The patient or roommate has behavioral or psychiatric issues that may pose a danger if a dog visits.

Can my service animal stay overnight in the hospital?

- Your service animal may stay overnight if you or your child is in an inpatient room that allows service animals.
- You are responsible for the care of your service animal at all times. You should have a plan for your service animal in case you are unable to care for it at any point or if you must go to an area of the hospital where service animals are not allowed.
- You may want to:
 - Have a family member take the animal outside for a break
 - Have the animal stay with friends or relatives
 - Boarding the dog

Hospital employees cannot care for service animals at any time.

Where can my service animal go to the bathroom?

- **Berenberg Garden (see Figure 1):** This is located on the first floor of the hospital (on the Longwood Campus) between the Farley and South Buildings. It's just beyond the Patient Entertainment Center and the Pre-Op clinic.



Figure 1

- **Perlmutter Park (see Figure 2):** This is located near the Main Entrance of the hospital (on the Longwood Campus). The stairs to the space are next to the Enders building, straight across from the Children's Hospital Primary Care Center (CHPCC) entrance.



Figure 2

- You must bring materials (like poop bags) to clean up after your dog. A garbage can is in the green space.

What happens if my animal has an accident in the hospital?

- If your dog has a bathroom accident inside the hospital, clean up after your dog as best as you can and then tell a staff member.
- You can also call Environmental Services at 857-218-5118 (or 8-5118 from a hospital phone) so they can disinfect the area.

Contact us

If you have questions or concerns, please call:

- Patient Relations: 617-355-7673
- Pawprints Dog Visitation Program: 617-355-6279

This Family Education Sheet is available in [Arabic](#) and [Spanish](#).