



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Service Animals at Nationwide Children's Hospital

A service animal, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Service animals do things that may be hard for the person to do by himself or herself. They do more than give emotional support and calm.

Typically, service animals are dogs (Picture 1). They are trained to always be “on duty” to help their owners. Some examples of things that they might do are:

- allow a blind or low-vision owner to move around safely
- alert a low-hearing or deaf owner to certain noises, such as when the phone is ringing or someone is knocking
- help the owner with physical problems carry medicine, get things that are out of reach or open doors
- warn the owner when there may be harmful chemical changes in the person's body or in the environment
- alert others when the owner is in trouble



Picture 1 Service animals
are typically dogs

Where service animals are allowed

Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) allows any patient, family member or visitor to use a service dog in most places. A staff person may ask you if the dog is needed due to a disability and what type of work or task the dog is trained to do.

Service dogs are **not allowed** in:

- places where patients' medicine, food or formula is prepared
- surgery (operating) and recovery rooms and some procedure and treatment rooms
- hematology (blood diseases) and oncology (cancer) units
- dialysis rooms
- burn units
- isolation rooms
- places where the dog or the medical equipment could be harmed, such as in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or radiation treatment rooms

A patient who needs a service dog will have his or her own private room.

Safety rules

To keep everyone safe, please follow these rules:

- Keep the dog controlled at all times on a leash or tethered (tied) to something such as a heavy chair that will not move. The dog must leave if:
 - you cannot control it or it gets away from you
 - it shows signs of excited or aggressive behavior such as lunging, barking, growling and snapping
 - it shows signs of illness or infection such as vomiting, diarrhea or eye drainage
- Do not leave the dog alone.
- Give the dog water often and bring food or treats with you as needed.
- Take your dog outside for walks and to poop. NCH staff will tell you where to go to do this.
 - Bring dog poop bags. The hospital will not have them to give you.
 - Throw used poop bags away in outside garbage cans and wash your hands with soap and water afterwards (Picture 2).
- Do not allow others to pet or play with the dog.
- Wash your hands often and ask others to do the same after touching the dog.



Picture 2 Wash hands often after touching an animal.

Healthcare facilities may pose a risk of infection to an animal. NCH is not responsible for any illness that your dog gets here.