

**MAMMAS
ON A
MISSION**





s.1 | e.8

Karen Wasson

Owner of Cocooned

Accessible clothing for children receiving medical care.

Karen is on a mission help make life a little easier and less stressful when a child is going through surgery or treatment in hospital.

WRAPPED IN LOVE

cocooned.com.au



Photography by [Sister Scout Studio](#)

5 ways to help a family when their child is in hospital

Created by Karen Wasson - Owner of Cocooned

1. Talk to them

Don't worry about whether or not it's a good time to call. If you call and it's not a good time, they won't answer. Leave a message, let them know you're thinking of them.

It's important not to be doing this too often though, they will get back to you when they can. If you have left a message and haven't heard from them in a few days, they may have forgotten and it could be worthwhile just letting them know you're still thinking of them.

Remain positive when speaking to them, but keep in mind, platitudes like "oh they'll be fine" or "they're in the best place" aren't terribly helpful. They are, at that moment, living something that can be quite harrowing, and remarks like this, while not meant to offend, often seem careless and unfeeling.

Your best bet is to commiserate as best you can, and if they mention something positive, tell them how glad you are that this positive thing has happened.

Usually words that help the most in these circumstances are things like "that's horrible" and "it really, really sucks". Expletives are welcome too! Accompanied by a loving hug (if appropriate).

2. Listen to them

Let them talk about their situation and their child, they may cry, and that's ok. If that would make you uncomfortable, send them a message and simply let them know that you're thinking of them. It's important for them to be able to offload, and feel like they have been heard.

They may want to explain their child's situation and the most amazing thing you can do for them is listen. Even better, if you're able to remember what condition their child has and gain a little understanding of where they are coming from, they will be so grateful.

3. Make specific offers of help

If you say “is there anything I can do to help?” more often than not, your offer will be kindly rebuffed, however much help they may actually need. The best way to help is to make specific offers.

For example; Let them know you'll be at the hospital on Tuesday night with dinner, some snacks and clean clothes. Perhaps Tuesday night won't work for them, but Wednesday will. By saying what you will do, and when you will do it, you are more likely to be able to provide that help.

Most importantly, don't make it complicated or difficult. If you say you are going to do something at a certain time on a certain day, make sure you are able to follow through. If something comes up and you are unable to, see if you can get someone else to do it, or organise another time. Do not make it a problem for the family to concern themselves with.

If they are in-between hospital and home;

- Get together some ready made meals to stock their fridge or freezer
- Walk the dog (or feed or care for other pets)
- Do their washing
- Organise a roster with other family and friends who also want to help
- Place a cold box or esky at the front door for people to drop off meals if no one is home
- Water their plants
- Help to get other children to and from school, sports, music practice or other commitments
- Offer to run them or their other children to and from the hospital

If they are away from home;

- Collect their mail
- Mow their lawn on the weekend
- Look after their dog (or other pets!)
- Clean the house
- Tend to the garden
- Stock their freezer for when they return home
- When they are returning home, stock their fridge

If you can drop by the hospital;

- Pick up their dirty laundry and bring them some clean clothes
- Ask if there's anything they need, perhaps a toothbrush or other toiletries
- Take in any school work (if relevant) for the child who is in hospital
- If it's allowed, take one of the child's friends to visit them
- Give the parent a break from the hospital room. You could sit with their child while they run errands or get some fresh air.

4. Don't forget about the siblings

It's a difficult time for the whole family. Siblings of the child in hospital may be upset and confused, as well as missing their parents and sibling. Spend some quality time with them, and ask them how they're doing.

If they are in the hospital, take them to do an activity just for them. Often there are places within the hospital like the Starlight room, where siblings are welcome too.

You could offer to take them out to a movie, or the beach or just do something that they enjoy.

5. Take, or send, the parents / carers something

Take them a magazine to flip through, a book, perhaps some slippers, or a clean pair of pyjamas. Think about what things they might need, and make them a little care package. They will certainly appreciate it.

We have a blog post that includes a list of **[21 helpful items for parents and carers](#)**.

There's also a two part post with great gift ideas for kids in hospital:

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)