



IPATS
Repatriation

Transferring a child back to their local hospital

Information for parents and carers



Introduction

As you are aware, your child was transferred to either Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street or Crumlin from another hospital for specialised or higher-level care. This transfer to Dublin is often part of a 'sharing of care' between a central 'Hub', Children's Health Ireland (CHI) and the 'Spokes' regional hospitals around the country. This model aims to deliver the right care to your child, in the right place, at the right time.

When your child no longer needs the specialist services in CHI, they can be safely moved back to their local hospital and medical team, close to home and family. This transfer is usually performed by the Irish Paediatric Acute Transport Service (IPATS) Repatriation Service.

We are aware that the transport of your child can be an anxious time. This feeling is natural and very common. Our aim is to make you feel as comfortable and supported as possible and we are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

Who are we?

The Irish Paediatric Acute Transport Service was set up in 2014 to bring very sick children to the intensive care units in Dublin. In 2023 we established a nurse-led repatriation



service to safely bring children back to their local hospital once they no longer need specialist Dublin-based care. Our nurses are all highly skilled children's nurses with years of experience and specialist training in the

transport of children by ambulance. They will accompany you and your child back to your local hospital in an ambulance staffed with an equally experienced ambulance technician. There will always be a consultant specialising in transport medicine supporting the nurse by phone if any unexpected issues arise.

Why is my child being transferred back to our local hospital?

Your child will only be referred to our team if they are fully stabilised, have seen all the specialist teams they need, and have had any special tests and procedures completed or booked. Our aim is to keep a flow of children into and out of the specialist hospitals so that every child can get the care they need when they need it.



Often the transfer Back is to complete a course of antibiotics or to finish fully weaning off oxygen or to get back onto oral feeds before going home. These can be very safely done in your local hospital.

What happens when my child is ready to be transferred back?

A care plan for your child is made between your child's consultant in Dublin and their consultant in your local hospital. Once the teams are happy with this plan, they will

contact us and request the transfer to take place, usually within 24hrs.

We look at each request and make sure that it is safe for your child to be moved by our team. When we arrive, we will introduce ourselves to your child, yourself and the staff caring for your child. Following a full handover from the staff, we will concentrate on assessing and preparing your child for transfer. At this stage we may be busy, but we will aim to keep you updated as we work. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us, or a member of staff you are familiar with.

Specialised Equipment

The equipment used will depend on your child's age, size, and condition. This may include monitoring equipment and a machine that can deliver oxygen. The staff transporting your child will be happy to explain the equipment to you.

The ambulance your child will be travelling in is specially designed to be comfortable for children and has all the equipment they might need during the trip.



Getting ready for transfer

The whole process may take some time, please do not be worried if this is the case. It is important your child is safe for transfer.

We encourage you to talk to and support your child when they are on the trolley. A favourite toy or blanket can be very helpful as well as a favourite book or tv show.

Travelling with your child

We would expect that a parent or guardian will travel with us in the ambulance. In exceptional circumstances we may be able to take both parents/guardians but have we no storage space for cases or belongings bigger than a carry on suitcase.

If you do accompany your child, please remain seated and always wear your seatbelt during the journey unless instructed by the team.

If you do not have access to private transport, a member hospital staff will discuss arrangements with you. We will ask you for your contact details and give you the contact details and directions of the receiving hospital.

If you are travelling on your own, please:

- Do not follow directly behind our ambulance as we may use lights and sirens to help us get through heavy traffic. Please use a safe speed when driving.
- It is not uncommon for the team to stop the ambulance for safety reasons if your child needs attention. Please do not be alarmed or stop behind the ambulance. If there is a problem, a member of the team will contact you with an update.

What happens at the local hospital?

When we arrive at the local hospital we will explain to the medical and nursing staff what has occurred with your child before and during the transfer. We will then move your child to their cot or bed. We will have a copy of all their records from Dublin to give to the team, including the results of any tests or procedures.

IPATS Transport Team Members

Nurse

Ambulance Crew

Other Crew Members

We value any feedback you would like to give us about the transport of your child by IPATS Repatriation Service. Our team will give you a feedback form to complete at your convenience. Please leave it with the ward staff and they will send it to IPATS. Alternatively, you may feedback to the IPATS team using the feedback forms that are available at www.ipats.ie or by scanning this QR code.



Copyright © Irish Paediatric Acute Transport Service and Children's Health Ireland

Authors: Dr Cathy Gibbons, Ms Lorraine Heery

Version: 1

Approval Date: October 2023

Review Date: October 2025

The information contained in this leaflet is correct at time of approval