

Guest Information/Frequently Asked Questions

Website information for prospective guests

Becoming a Guest at Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House

Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House offers families facing a medical crisis a place to rejuvenate and re-group away from the hospital. Our goal is to provide a safe haven of comfort and support so that families are able to devote 100% of their energies to the children's recovery.

Below is a list of questions commonly asked by families requesting a room at Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House. We hope our answers are helpful to you.

What makes a family eligible for a room at Ronald McDonald House?

Any family whose child is receiving medical treatment (inpatient or outpatient) at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) or other area hospital may request a room at Ronald McDonald House. As our House is always full, families who live within a 40-mile radius of RMHC may stay at the House only under certain circumstances, described below.

Those families living within a 40-mile radius who have a child in the Cardiac Care Unit, Intensive Care Unit ("ICU") or Regional Center for Newborn Intensive Care ("RCNIC") may stay at the House as long as their child is a patient in one of these special care units. In the case of ICU or RCNIC, a family's continued stay will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the Guest Services Manager after consultation with the family's social worker.

Who may stay at Ronald McDonald House? Can other family members stay with a family?

Parents or legal guardians of any child may reside at Ronald McDonald House. Parents are welcome to bring siblings but note that child care is not provided and that an adult must supervise children at all times

Anyone outside the immediate family, such as an aunt, uncle or grandparent, must be helping to serve as support for the family and must be approved by RMHC management. We can provide only one room per family. In compliance with Fire Code Regulations, we do have a maximum capacity for each room. The maximum number of people per room is dependent on the size of the room. Rooms range in occupancy size from 2 – 6 people. Our largest rooms are our transplant patients.

How many people can stay in a Ronald McDonald House room?

The number of family members per room depends on the room size:

- Large room – 6 (these rooms are reserved for families with children in isolation, normally after a transplant)
- Medium room – 4 (majority of rooms)
- Small room – 2

What security measures are taken to ensure the safety of guest families?

At Ronald McDonald House, our top priority is the health, safety and well being of our guest families. For this reason, we have various policies and safeguards in place:

Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult relative or legal guardian.

For your health, all families are screened to prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout our Ronald McDonald House.

The safety of all Ronald McDonald House families is very important to us. Please speak with a Guest Services Manager if anyone planning to stay with your family has a restraining order or "no contact" order. RMHC reserves the right to refuse admittance to any potential resident or guest with a criminal conviction. RMHC does not admit anyone with a felony or misdemeanor conviction that may threaten the health, safety, welfare, and ability of other individuals to peacefully enjoy the House (e.g., violent crimes, domestic violence, child abuse, sex offenses, illegal drug activity and/or burglary). RMHC also will not admit any individual who provides false, incomplete, or misleading responses during the formal criminal history background check process. RMHC, in its sole discretion, will make that determination before granting an individual's

application for temporary residence. RMHC also reserves the right to expel a guest for any other inappropriate, irresponsible, or criminal behavior that takes place while temporarily residing at the House.

RMHC conducts a formal criminal history background check on all individuals applying for temporary residence at RMHC. (This include overnight guests.)

How does a family request a room at Ronald McDonald House?

As our House is normally full, we place families in need of a room on our waiting list. RMHC will review and consider applications for temporary residence no earlier than seven calendar days prior to a family's arrival at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center or any other qualifying area hospital. After receipt of the initial information the family will be required to complete and submit back a number of forms including a criminal background check authorization. It will attempt to place a family on the waiting list 24 hours prior to their arrival at CCHMC or any other qualifying area hospital. RMHC will attempt to place families from another country or Hawaii, Alaska or Puerto Rico on the waiting list 72 hours prior to their hospital admission. The wait list is neither a reservation or a guarantee to a room.

The number to phone to request a room is (513) 636-7642. Since there is always a waiting list, Ronald McDonald House cannot accommodate walk-ins.

* We do not take advance reservations because we never know how long a child may need to be in the hospital. Because of this, we are not able to reserve or guarantee a room more.

May a family stay at Ronald McDonald House if their child is being seen as an outpatient only?

Yes. A family is welcomed to a room at Ronald McDonald House whether their child is an inpatient or outpatient at CCHMC; or, with pre-approval, another area hospital. The child must be age 18 or younger; although, exceptions can be made for patients over 18 who received medical treatment at CCHMC prior to age 18. If the patient is under the age of 18, he or she must be accompanied in the House by a parent or guardian at all times.

For any family whose child is being treated on an outpatient basis, the child must be receiving treatment at least twice per week. (Exceptions to this may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Operations Director). It is important to note the family may be required to show proof of treatment frequency to a Guest Services Manager.

If a family needs to return at a later date, can they reserve a room?

Unfortunately, we cannot reserve a room for a particular visit, but the family may phone the House to request a spot on the waiting list up to 24 hours (or 72 hours for families outside the 48 contiguous U.S.). As soon as a room becomes available, the House will contact the family. If the family needs to make alternative arrangements (due to the waiting list), they can contact Guest Services at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

Can a family go home and keep their room?

The House maintains a waiting list of families requesting rooms at Ronald McDonald House. If a family is unable to use their room at least once each day, RMHC will request that they check out so that another family may be served. The family may request to be placed on the waiting list again once they have checked out of the House.

Can a family have more than one room; for example, a second room for a nurse or grandparents?

Although the House has 78 rooms, we are always full to capacity and always have a waiting list. As a result, we limit the rooms to one per family.

Is there a fee to live at Ronald McDonald House?

It costs \$90 a night per room to operate the Ronald McDonald House program. To support the ongoing operations of the House, we encourage, but do not require, guests to make a donation of \$25 per night, or whatever they are able, in order to continue the House operations for future guests. However, no family is ever turned away due to their inability to contribute. Please discuss any questions with the Guest Services Manager.

We also work with families to see whether a third party, such as medical insurance, will pay. If you have insurance or Medicaid, please contact them before coming to Ronald McDonald House to establish what is required for them to pay for your stay.

What is the relationship between the House and McDonald's?

While McDonald's restaurants support Ronald McDonald House through funding and the use of their internationally recognized brand, RMHC is neither owned nor fully funded by McDonald's. The financial contributions from McDonald's account for 8% of the RMHC annual operating budget.

What is the relationship between Ronald McDonald House and Cincinnati Children's?

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) and Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House share a strategic partnership. Our House exists primarily to serve the patients and families of CCHMC; although, we do on occasion accept families with children at other area hospitals. CCHMC has made significant financial contributions to and investments in our House, including an \$11 million strategic investment enabling us to build our new 30-room west wing. While Ronald McDonald House is grateful for our partnership with CCHMC, our House is neither owned nor fully funded by CCHMC.

What does Ronald McDonald House offer?

- Each family has their own bedroom with one or two beds, private bathroom, telephone, hairdryer, television and DVD player.
- Shared communal spaces include: kitchen and dining areas, large living rooms, a computer area with internet access, a library, laundry facilities (washer and dryer) @ 50c each, a game room, indoor and outdoor play areas and access to an exercise room.
- We provide guest families with towels, blankets and other linens and ask only that, while in our House, guests take responsibility for keeping these items laundered.
- We provide limited cleaning supplies and paper products.
- We often have basic food items and toiletries available.
- We also have cribs and breast pumps available for guests to check out.
- While we have only limited wheelchairs to offer, we can accommodate families with wheelchairs.
- We have a limited number of strollers, car seats and baby monitors.
- Families are responsible for keeping their room in good condition, cleaning up after their family in all areas of the House and cleaning their linens as needed.
- Free secure parking for one vehicle only.

Is food available at Ronald McDonald House?

- Ronald McDonald House has two kitchens for our families to use. Each family is provided with their own small kitchen cabinet for dry food, as well as common refrigerator space with a marked basket. The kitchen is fully stocked with cooking appliances and utensils. Free coffee is available 24/7 with a vending machine where guests may buy Coke products.
- We strive to provide at least one meal a day prepared by outside volunteer meal groups (civic groups, churches, area businesses, etc.), but we cannot guarantee a meal each day.
- We do provide a pantry stocked with basic non-perishable food, as well as such staple items as milk, orange juice, eggs, bread and some other items.

What type of activities does the Ronald McDonald House offer for my children to enjoy?

Our House offers a variety of areas for children and parents to relax and have fun:

- Play room
- Game room with a pool table, arcade games, Playstation and Wii systems
- Craft room
- Games closet with puzzles and board games

- Planned activities, puppet shows, musical performers, theatre
- Therapy dogs
- Teaching program for school-aged patient children
- Outside garden play area
- Basketball hoops

Can Ronald McDonald House assist me with tickets to local attractions?

Our House is fortunate to have the support of several area attractions, including:

- Cincinnati Children's Museum (limited number)
- Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden
- Newport Aquarium (limited number)

Will Ronald McDonald House provide me with transportation?

- There is a shuttle service between Ronald McDonald House and Cincinnati Children's from 5:00 PM to 11:00 PM week days and 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM – 11:00 PM on weekends.
- The shuttle also takes guests to area grocery stores on selected days each week, as well as to a variety of other stores, including Wal-Mart, Kroger, Meier's and Target.

How close is Cincinnati Children's to Ronald McDonald House?

- Across the street, walking distance
- See Map

Does Ronald McDonald House provide internet access?

Yes, wireless internet access is provided in our House.

What can families expect when they arrive at Ronald McDonald House?

After the family has phoned to be placed on the waiting list, they will be contacted by a staff member or volunteer as soon as a room becomes available. Families can check in between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM; however, exceptions can be made upon request.

Each Ronald McDonald House family is asked to make an appointment time for check-in. All adult guests are required to have a photo ID with them at check-in. When the family arrives at the House, they will be required to complete the check-in process with a member of the House staff or with one of our volunteers. During this check-in process, the family will receive a brief introduction, a review of House policies and procedures and will take a quick tour of the House.

A Ronald McDonald House representative will also show the family to their private bedroom/bathroom and provide them with a set of keys. After this orientation, families are able to return to the hospital, relax in their room, enjoy a meal with their family and other guests in the dining room or spend time in any of the common areas within our House.

Can flowers, packages and gift baskets be sent to a family while they are staying at Ronald McDonald House?

Yes. We accept deliveries during normal business hours and will be happy to forward them to the family. Because families sometimes check out unexpectedly, however, it is best to call and confirm that a particular family is still staying at the House before you send anything.

Please note, however, we may not accept any delivery of medical supplies or medications. A family representative must be present to receive such deliveries.

Does Ronald McDonald House provide counseling?

There is no formal counseling program, but families do receive support from staff, volunteers and other families going through similar experiences.

Are families permitted to have visitors?

Limited day visitors are welcome, but must sign in at the front desk. The children living at Ronald McDonald House are medically fragile and highly susceptible to infections. Any person who has a physical condition that would endanger the health of our other guests, such as a cold or flu, chickenpox, etc., may not visit Ronald McDonald House. Visiting hours are between 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM.

Is there maid service?

No. Your room at Ronald McDonald House is your place to rest and rejuvenate as you care for your ill child. Our volunteers are very generous with their time and energies in operating our House, but they are not asked to clean your room during your stay. We ask that you take responsibility for maintaining your room while you are here, including cleaning your room daily, washing your own dishes and frequently laundering your bed linens and bath towels.

Is there babysitting service?

No. Parents are required to be responsible for their own children and provide supervision at all times. Children under the age of 18 may not be left alone in the House.

Is smoking permitted at Ronald McDonald House?

There is no smoking anywhere inside Ronald McDonald House.

There is, however, one designated outdoor area for smoking. This designated smoking area is THE ONLY place smoking is allowed. The rest of our House and grounds are smoke free.

Is there a curfew?

To maintain the safety of our guests, the doors to Ronald McDonald House are always locked. Guests receive keys so that they may come and go to suit the needs of their children. Quiet hours are between 10:00 PM and 9:00 AM. We ask that all guests respect these quiet hours.