

for the family, and providing information in an unbiased and culturally sensitive manner ([Eichner and Johnson, 2012](#)).

Sibling Reactions

Siblings' reactions to a sister's or brother's illness or hospitalization are discussed in [Chapter 18](#) and differ little when a child becomes temporarily ill. Siblings experience loneliness, fear, and worry, as well as anger, resentment, jealousy, and guilt. Illness may also result in children's loss of status within either their family or their social group. Various factors have been identified that influence the effects of the child's hospitalization on siblings. Recently, it has been found that parents of siblings of children with chronic illness tended to rate sibling health-related quality of life better than the siblings' self-reports and greater disease severity of affected child and older sibling age may be risk factors for impaired well sibling quality of life ([Limbers and Skipper, 2014](#)). Although these factors are similar to those seen when a child has a chronic illness, [Craft \(1993\)](#) reported that the following factors regarding siblings are related specifically to the hospital experience and increase the effects on the sibling:

- Being younger and experiencing many changes
- Being cared for outside the home by care providers who are not relatives
- Receiving little information about their ill brother or sister
- Perceiving that their parents treat them differently compared with before their sibling's hospitalization

Parents are often unaware of the number of effects that siblings experience during the sick child's hospitalization and the benefit of simple interventions to minimize such effects, such as explicit explanations about the illness and provisions for the siblings to remain at home. Sibling visitation is usually beneficial to the patient, sibling, and parent but should be evaluated on an individual basis. Siblings should be prepared for the visit with developmentally appropriate information and be given the opportunity to ask questions.