

# Hindustan Times



## TheCARER

DONA JHON (24)

### 'We request, not force, patients to have drugs'

**I**N NURSING school, nurse Dona Jhon was taught to force medicine down the throats of patients who refused their daily dose of medicine. Now she cannot imagine doing that. "We are told to respect the wishes of a patient. So if a patient says no to medicine, we try to convince him or her politely. Only when they agree do we give it to them, even if it is prescribed," says Jhon.

"We didn't learn any of this at nursing school. The entire nursing brief has been turned on its head. At school, there was barely any emphasis on how we looked, spoke or dealt with patients and their families, but now that's as important as the medical aspect. Here, a smiling face is a must. No one, ill or otherwise, wants a grumpy or expressionless nurse around," says Jhon, who works in the paediatric ward at the Max Super Speciality Hospital in Saket, south Delhi.

When she joined the hospital two years ago, all she expected was to put her knowledge to use without interference from the hospital administration. The emphasis on behaviour surprised her. "The concept of the human touch has now come in. It wasn't there earlier. It's important that patients take away happy memories of their stay with us," misses Jhon.

The importance being given to communication skills doesn't amaze her. "It's a good thing. If a nurse is pleasant and polite, the patient is able to express themselves better and that helps us take better care of their needs," she says.

She misses her trinkets, though. "The uniforms have been specially designed for us to look neat and the grooming classes are given to help us put our best face forward. Sometimes I wonder — why would a nurse on surgical duty need to apply lip gloss? — but then I realise it's all about cleanliness and hygiene. When a groomed look becomes a habit, it stays with you, wherever you go," she says.

**HEALING WITH LOVE:** Despite the 48-hour drip to treat viral diarrhoea, 15-month-old Arunsh Arun looks forward to the new toys nurse Dona Jhon brings him every day

# In Hospital and Lovin' it

**Text: Sanchita Sharma and Rhythm Kaul in Delhi and Neha Bhayana in Mumbai Photos: Jasjeet Plaha**

**E**KANT JUNEJA, 13, was in hospital with viral pneumonia on his birthday last Thursday but he has no complaints. He had four friends over for the day and they watched films, played games on the Playstation portable, overdosed on hot chocolate, pizza and brownies, and danced till late at night to Akon while his parents stepped out for a movie to give them some time alone.

"My neighbours at home complain more. A nurse would pop in to check on me every half hour, but besides that, they left us Balone. I could get used to this," says the DPS student.

The trend is not peculiar to Delhi. With ceiling-to-floor stained glass walls, a fine-dining restaurant, beauty salon and a Wi-Fi resource centre, the only thing that marks the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai as a hospital is the sign that says 'Emergency and Casualty' and the directory of departments on one wall. Apart from the basic beauty treatments and massages, the salon offers 'at-your-bed' services to patients and wigs to

those who have lost hair during chemotherapy for cancer treatment.

Money can't buy you health, but it can make surviving illnesses less of an ordeal. Long queues, rude doctors, surly nurses, unpalatable food and disinfectant odours have been aspirated out of many corporate hospitals offering five-star treatment. Taking a leaf out of the hospitality sector, they are trying to make your stay as plush and comfortable as in a hotel. It isn't cheap, but it's an option, atleast.

Hospitals are increasingly focusing on minimising stress, both physical and mental.

"We plan to set up a play area for chronically ill children so that they don't get bored waiting. They may now even look forward to the hospital visit," says Dr Anupam Sibal, group director, hospital services, Apollo Hospitals. But the medical aspects are not ignored. "Patients always choose based on treatment records, and so hospitals have been competing to get the best medical minds and equipment. Now that this is in place, the focus has shifted to comfort and facilities that would make it stand out from the others," says a hospital administrator who refused to be named.

## Suite your comfort

### HOSPITALS

Max Hospitals VIP suite: **Rs 20,000** per night  
Fortis La Femme suite: **Rs 18,000** per night  
Apollo Hospitals suite: **Rs 18,000** per night  
Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital suite: **Rs 11,000** per night

### HOTELS

Shangri-La Hotel premier double room: **Rs 13,000** per night

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**The TRAINER**

**JISHA K. K. (26)**

### 'Nurses must dress neatly, thread brows and use gloss'

**I**RRESPECTIVE OF training, job profile or past experience, all nurses undergo nursing training, grooming and personality lessons at corporate hospitals. "Since most people have medical experience, the emphasis is on developing soft skills such as service excellence and communicating care," says nursing educationist and trainer Jisha K.K.

"Staff members have to look presentable as a pleasing personality and good communication skills help in dealing with patients and their families. An important segment of our training comprises personality development. Getting eyebrows and upper lips made, use of lip-gloss, tying-up hair in a neat bun without even a strand out of place are mandatory for nurses," says Jisha, who also teaches basic make-up techniques at the Max Super Speciality Hospital in Saket.

Jewellery is taboo because of reasons of hygiene, though small studs in ears are allowed. "With some nurses insisting that they should be allowed to wear their wedding rings, we've started allowing them that," says Jisha. So is speaking in vernacular languages among themselves when patients are around.

"Speaking in a language others don't understand is rude and can really infuriate the listener," says Jisha. "Nurses can speak to patients in a language they are comfortable with as that makes them feel at home. After all, that is our aim: to make those who visit us not miss home."

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**ThePAMPERER**  
PREETI KAMBOJ (24)

**MATERNITY CARE:**  
Kamboj, seen here giving a manicure  
calls herself a skin aesthetician

## ‘No one wants to leave hospital looking like a rag’

**M**EGHA CHADHA, 29, has a lot of questions for the skin expert she's spending the afternoon with. She wants to know more about the microderma-abrasion procedure she is getting done to peel off the dead skin from her hands to make them soft and fair. "What do you use for the exfoliation? Diamond or glass? How safe is it? I don't want anything going wrong," she says.

Chadha's paranoia is natural. She is 33-weeks pregnant, and has travelled across the city from Civil Lines to get pampered at the Med Spa at Fortis's La Femme hospital in south Delhi's Greater Kailash.

Preeti Kamboj, who is doing the exfoliation, answers her questions patiently. "You don't have to worry at all. All the procedures done here are completely safe for you and your baby," says the 24-year-old, who holds the rather unusual designation of 'skin aesthetician' at Fortis La Femme, the birthing centre that has now positioned itself as an answer to any woman's — pregnant or otherwise — prayer.

Kamboj doesn't tire of women prattling about their newborns. "Having a baby is

a very happy moment for all women and these days they don't want to walk out of hospital after delivery looking like a rag. They want to look their best, for themselves and the photo albums, so they go for a range of procedures, beginning with skin-pigmentation correction and going on to botox and plastic surgery, done by cosmetic surgeons," she says.

While training as a skin specialist, Kamboj had not imagined she would ever end up working in a hospital. "Most of my friends work in hotels, but I like it here. We usually get women in their 20s and 30s — both pregnant and post-delivery — who want advice on what to do to look their best. Women undergo a lot of biological changes when they are expecting and often become unhappy with the way they end up looking. They prefer getting treated at a medical spa because it gives them the assurance that all procedures are medically sound," said Kamboj.

Chadha is happy about the pampering. "I love this place. Of course I want to look good. I want the baby to have a pretty mum around," she says with a laugh.

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## ‘Patients are fussier than leisure travellers’

**A**FTER SPENDING two summers hopping from one Jamaican isle to another on the luxury liner Carnival, you might think it would be a tad boring cooking bland food for patients. It's not, claims chef Himanshu Sharma, 30, who once worked on the liner.

Now, as head of the kitchen at Delhi's Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, he finds planning meals for patients a bigger challenge than pleasing the palates of leisure travellers. "It's not easy cooking appetising meals for patients who are on pain-relievers and antibiotics. Medication often numbs their tastebuds, making food either taste like sawdust or like nothing on earth," says Sharma, who has also trained at the Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi. "I've got some strange complaints about too much chilli or salt when no chilli or spices were added at all," he laughs.

To make food palatable for harried patients and their families, Sharma offers a menu that puts many restaurants to shame. He doesn't think it's enough, though. "Of course, we don't have as much choice on offer, but we do try to offer more than khichdi and porridge," he says.

Sharma is being modest. A peek into the

hospital's Tuesday menu showed that patients had a choice of six soups along with a continental, north Indian and south Indian meal options. The continental platter alone offered a choice of soup, carrot and orange salad or fish cakes, Afghan korma or chicken stew with rice or pasta, steamed vegetables, dinner rolls, caramel custard and a fruit platter.

"Patients are routinely asked about their food preferences. Cooking here is a bigger challenge than a commercial kitchen due to the constraints set by dietitians monitoring the patient's needs. What I miss is garnishing and presentation, because we cannot play around given the volume and the format," says Sharma.

But Sharma more than makes up in the cafeteria menu, offering wild mushroom soup, baked fish and crème brûlée. Patients' companions now, no longer need to get food from home, with 24/7 room service.

The idea, says Dr Anupam Sibal, is to make the stay as comfortable as possible. "We had a child on chemotherapy who ate very little, so the chef prepared the boy's favourite food, rajma-chawal for lunch. You should have seen the boy eat that day, he was thrilled," says Dr Sibal.

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## ‘Like hotels, we look after guests, albeit ill ones’

**N**AZNEEN KHAN'S job is to put patients at ease the moment they walk into Max Super Speciality Hospital in Saket. Sporting a 'May I help you?' badge and a smile, she and each member of her team have to be a "friend, mentor and guide" to all patients and their families as they navigate the endless corridors that make up a modern hospital.

"Patient-care is not just about the patient anymore, how we treat the family is equally important. There is no difference between a hotel and a hospital, we just look after sick guests," said Khan.

The skills taught in the hospitality industry come very handy here, which is why many people from the hotel industry now form part of the core, functional team. "We are told that those who visit hospitals don't come by choice and are not in the best state of mind. Our focus is to

make things as smooth as possible for them and their families," says Khan, who is also trained in basic life support and fire safety measures.

The stress of seeing a loved one in distress and pain make even the most even-tempered of people irritable. "The hospital experience should be as hassle-free as possible. Since we are the first point-of-contact between the patients and the doctors and the hospital, the impression we create often sets the tone for the whole experience," she said.

With footfalls ranging between 500 and 1,000 on any given day, Khan spends a lot of time on her feet. "Someone from the team is accessible at any point of time during the day and night. We have members not only in the reception area but also all across the hospital. Whatever the need, we are there to address them," she says.