



Size: 116.97 sq. cm.

Date: Monday, 27 June 2005
Page Number: 22
Edition: July
Supplement: Main

Market: National
Circulation: 24,543
Published: MONTHLY
Editorial: [email the editor](mailto:email_the_editor)
Item No: P6554130

NO EASY ANSWERS

Q My two-year-old daughter was diagnosed two months ago with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and is currently undergoing chemotherapy. This is a very difficult time for her and us. We also have a seven-month-old son, who also needs out love and attention. As she is two years old we have struggles with sleeping, eating, tantrums and so on, and these are, of course, magnified greatly by her illness and treatment. Some advice on these issues would be great.

Emma Menegaldo (via email)

A The challenges of parenting two young children, each with their own needs, is difficult even at the best of times, let alone when illness becomes a factor, says Deborah Nemeth, clinical nurse consultant in child and family health at Karitane. I would encourage you to access any support services available to you. Your hospital, local GP or child and family health nurse can help and they can also refer you to other support

services for more intensive support as necessary. You have already identified in your letter how important love and attention is. Dividing your time will be near impossible so try creating some positive times together with both children. Sitting together and reading a picture book or including your daughter in short, supervised play activities for your son can be enjoyable for all. Your children will also need to feel a sense of stability and security in the home as life outside has become so unpredictable. Try to incorporate some consistency into your daily routine when at home. Even small predictable events, such as a routine around meal or sleep times, together with your love and reassurance, will help promote this sense of security. **PP**