

# Kiwanis<sup>®</sup>

International

Serving the Children of the World<sup>®</sup>

*A service idea for Young Children: Priority One*

## What a Kiwanis doll can do

### THE PAIN

A hospital experience can be overwhelming for an adult. Imagine what it is like for a sick or injured child.

The child enters a strange environment of bright lights, strange noises, uncomfortable furniture and lots of strangers. Someone takes away clothes and starts poking and prodding. The child has no sense of control. Through all this, the child hurts.

### THE PURPOSE

Here's a way to help these children: the gift of a Kiwanis doll, which can serve many purposes.

**Boredom buster.** A child can draw on the doll with markers, distracting him from discomfort and boredom. Because the doll is soft and squeezable, it can be a comfort when the child is anxious.

**Outlet for expression.** The child can express his fear or unhappiness by drawing a face on the doll. Also, the child can mark on the doll the injury or pain she feels. This allows adults to discuss concerns or pains more objectively with the child.

**Doctor's demonstration.** When medical personnel use the doll to show a child what will happen during the procedure, it helps the child understand. Sometimes the child can even help "doctor" the doll. This converts the activity into something the child has control over. Often, this allows a child as young as 2 or 3 years old to undergo the procedure much more calmly, whether it's putting on an oxygen mask or having a cut sutured.

Explaining a procedure using the doll as an example can actually save medical personnel time because children are so much more cooperative, according to Gerry Silk, clinical nurse educator at Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, Australia.

Each child keeps his doll when leaving the hospital, a positive reminder of the hospital visit.



## Kiwanis dolls

SERVICE BULLETIN

### Anatomy of a doll

What makes a doll a Kiwanis doll?

**Height:**

15 inches

**Covering:**

cotton fabric

**Contents:**

soft stuffing

**Features:**

child's choice

**Benefit:**

comfort and  
companionship



### Melanie's story

Melanie was a 5-year-old girl brought to the emergency department with obstructed breathing caused by severe tonsillitis. The doctor said she would require an intravenous line for administering antibiotics.

Melanie's father asked her, "Are you scared?" She said, "Yes," and started crying. As her nurse, I thought she would benefit from having a doll to play with. When she was given the doll, along with some felt-tipped pens, she began to draw lines on the doll to act as clothes.

I asked her, "Could I put a drip into the doll, like the one you will have?" She said, "Yes," so we put an intravenous cannula into the doll and then gave some medicine (water) to the doll, which Melanie helped with.

When it was time for Melanie to go into the treatment room, I asked if she wanted to take the doll with her, and she replied, "There are some things dolly does not need to see!" Once her own intravenous cannula was in situ, with no fuss at all from Melanie, the drip was connected, and, with supervision from me, she gave a flush of saline.

The doll was really useful to help Melanie understand what was to happen to her and also how a drip works. She loved the doll and cuddled with it all the way to the ward.

—Robyn Corser



### Making dolls

Kiwanis dolls are about 15 inches tall, with a round head, two legs and two arms, but no features.

This guide includes a copy of the doll pattern. Take this pattern to the people you've recruited to make the dolls for the club project. This may be club members and spouses. Often, clubs identify a sewing group in a church or retirement community, Aktion Club or school that agrees to make dolls. Discuss with them how many dolls they can comfortably produce on a monthly basis.

Using the sewing groups' input, identify the proper cotton material, stuffing material (usually polyester fiberfill) and thread to purchase. The material should be cotton, so children can mark on it with water-based markers, and light enough in color so markers will show. Beige or white are the usual choices, but a light brown may appeal to children with darker skin. Most children will be happy with pastel colors, such as pink, light blue, light green or even lavender!

Look for vendors who will give discounts for large quantity purchases or companies that will donate materials left over from a manufacturing process.

The pattern includes a Kiwanis label, but this is optional. You can purchase labels from the Kiwanis Store (item #10695) and a package of 100 costs US\$6.00 ([www.kiwanis.org/store](http://www.kiwanis.org/store)).

Sometimes, the sewing group asks that the Kiwanians deliver the material already cut in the pattern and ready for sewing. The sewing experts may have special instructions on the best way to cut the material.

Of course, before large-scale sewing begins, make several samples and approach the local hospital about using the dolls.

## Making the hospital connection

Introduce the doll project to the hospital by contacting the emergency department or the pediatrics department. Explain that you have a program that can help children adjust to being at a hospital that won't cost the hospital any funds. Make an appointment to present the program.

At the meeting, show the doll, outline its uses and explain that your Kiwanis club would like to supply dolls to the hospital.

The hospital may need some time to make a decision. So, make sure you know who will be the contact at the hospital for follow-up—and make sure that person knows you will be calling.

Once the hospital agrees to use the Kiwanis dolls, discuss the quantity needed, which children will receive them and what recognition Kiwanis will receive. Also, think about providing washable markers to the hospital for coloring the dolls.

## Making the parent connection

This is an example of a short, simple information card that can be given to parents, posted on a bulletin board or left on a counter to explain the Kiwanis doll project.

### Kiwanis doll

Dear Parent,

Your child may receive a blank doll upon arrival. The doll is for your child to keep.

This doll can help your child feel more comfortable. Help your child color a face on the doll so it looks like him or her. Encourage your child to draw an expression on the face that reflects how he feels. Then, have your child draw the injury or pain that he feels.

When the nurses and doctors examine your child, they may use the doll to discuss the injury or illness. And they may use the doll to demonstrate any medical procedures your child needs, so your child will understand what will happen next.

The Kiwanis Club of [insert name] provides Kiwanis dolls as a service to the community. If you would like to learn more about this project or about Kiwanis, contact [insert name] at [insert phone and/or e-mail address].

## Tom's story

Tom was a 6-year-old boy who had cut his scalp at school. I asked if I could have a look at his cut, and he let me willingly. I said, "I think that the doctor will want to sew it up. Otherwise it will not get better." I explained to the school nurses that sedation would take an hour. They felt that Tom would not go to sleep due to his hyperactivity and it would take too long. They felt it would be better if we just got it over with.

I then got the suture kit and said to Tom, "I'll show you how we are going to make you better." I showed him the doll with the cut and how we would clean it first, demonstrating as I went. He then took the forceps from me and cleaned his own cut on his own head!

I then showed him the suture materials, saying how small and soft it was and that the needle was very tiny. He took it from me and attempted to sew up the cut on the doll. He asked, "Did the dolly cry?" I said, "Yes, a little bit, but it was OK and he kept very still and it was all over quickly."

The two nurses held his hand, and I steadied his head. We explained everything that was going on. He wriggled a bit but didn't need to be restrained.

—Rebecca Burden

## Kiwanis doll pattern

On behalf of the children who use these dolls, Kiwanis thanks you most sincerely for participating in this project.

This pattern and instructions are provided by the Kiwanis Club of Burnside, South Australia.

### SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

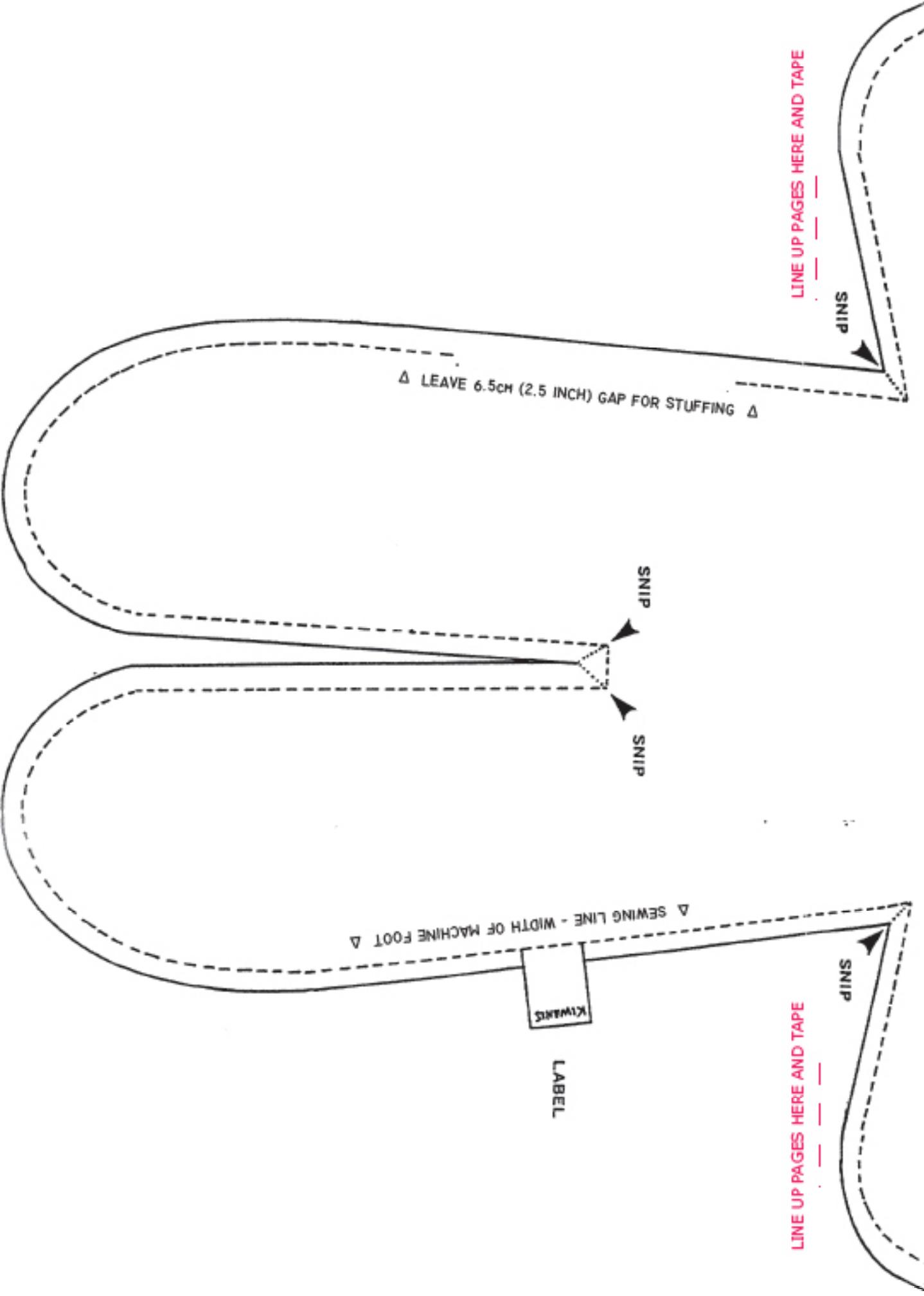
- Use the width of your sewing machine foot (presser foot) as the width for the seam.
- Leave a gap of approximately 6.5 centimeters or 2.5 inches in one leg for stuffing.
- Sew the label in the seam of the opposite leg (optional).
- Snip into corners where indicated.
- Turn the doll inside out and stuff.
- Hand-sew the stuffing gap in the leg.

### STUFFING INSTRUCTIONS

- Dolls are stuffed through the gap in the leg.
- Chopsticks or knitting needles are good tools to push the stuffing.
- Start with the head, then arms, then legs and lastly the chest.
- The dolls should be firm, but not too firm. If legs or arms flop, more stuffing is needed.



[www.kiwanis.org](http://www.kiwanis.org)



Pattern and instructions provided by the Kiwanis Club of Burnside, South Australia.

# KIWANIS DOLL PATTERN

On behalf of the children in our hospitals who use these dolls, Kiwanis thanks you most sincerely for participating in this project.

## Sewing instructions

Use the width of your sewing machine foot as the width for the seam.

Leave a gap of approximately 6.5 centimeters or 2.5 inches in one leg for stuffing.

Sew in the label on the opposite leg. Snip into corners, where indicated.

Turn the doll inside out and stuff.

Hand-sew the stuffing gap in the leg.

## Stuffing instructions

Dolls are stuffed through the gap in the leg. Chopsticks are good tools to push in stuffing. Start with the head, then arms, then legs and lastly the chest. The dolls should be firm, but not too firm. If legs or arms flop, more stuffing is needed.



LINE UP PAGES HERE AND TAPE

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