

GM rates all the latest and hottest games



Beds? Hmm, judging by all the recent news stories you won't need many.



Bloated Head. Nasty disease that. Cured by popping the head and re-inflating.



If your doctor had this in his surgery you would ever go and see him.



The torture chamber. Also known as the cardio room. They make you exercise.



The Grim Reaper makes his big appearance when you get it wrong.

The game prepared to give an enema to all other business-sims?...

THEME HOSPITAL



- AVAILABLE ON
- PC
- PlayStation
- Game Boy Advance
- Game Boy Color
- Game Boy Advance SP
- Game Boy Advance 2G
- Game Boy Advance 3G

TESTED

Just about everyone at one time or another has had the pleasure of sitting in a hospital casualty department for hours on end waiting for treatment. Why is it never like *Holby General* where you are seen in five minutes flat by that lovely little nurse with the cute nose stud who always smiles and can cure you in seconds? Noooo. In real life we get the toothless old hag who's partial to a bit of the old leech-on-skin action. When you're there you always claim you could do better. Now prove it.

The Bullfrog boys obviously thought that running a theme park was a bit tame. After all,

why bother deciding how much salt to put on fries when you could be deciding whether someone with a crippling illness should live or not?

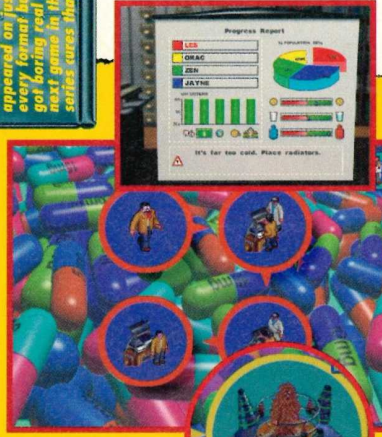
Hospital is eerily similar to *Theme Park*. Instead of placing rides you place your various clinics or offices. Instead of cute little people walking around you get diseased mutants shambling about and instead of rides breaking-down you get people dying all over the place (and those corpses cause all sorts of problems). Cure enough people, run an efficient enough hospital and of course, make enough money and you'll get offered a job on the next level. Then you get to do it all again, but this time with a different set of problems to face.

Theme Hospital manages to avoid some of the traps that *Theme Park* fell into face first. Some, but not all. The structure of the game, with the different levels actually having new and different features means that there is actually a point to working through it, whereas *TP* just had you doing exactly the same thing again and again. So *TH* doesn't get as dull as *TP*.

However they both share a problem. After you have set up your hospital and got all your staff working you get backed into the same corner every time. You've made enough money and cured enough people to progress to the next level but the game keeps telling you to sort out your hospital's problems.



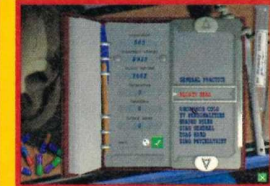
Freshly installed bogs, just waiting for the diarrhoea epidemic. Imagine the mess if they weren't built though.



That's what I like to see. No queues and no corpses littering the place up.



I wouldn't stand too close to this bony bloke, it might be contagious.



Call up your cure book and decide how much to charge for saving lives.

IT'S A DISASTER

If they filmed another Carry On Doctor film they'd have to put these disasters and emergencies in it.

Vomit Waves
Your hospital is running smoothly when all of a sudden everyone starts doing impersonations of Linda Blair in *The Exorcist* and throwing up.

Boiler Breakdowns
Well it's pretty hard to keep things going when your boilers refuse to power anything.

Earthquake
Japan, San Francisco and California don't have the monopoly on tremors. You're going

to get hit by them too. They can seriously disrupt proceedings.

Rats
That sensitive piece of surgery is going well. The patient's innards are exposed and all of a sudden a mass of rats descend on the operating theatre. That won't look good in your report.

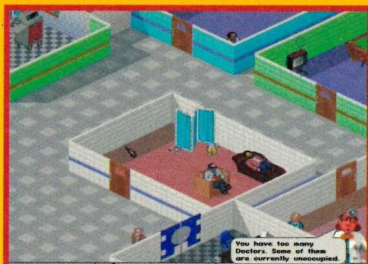
Emergencies
Every so often there will be a serious incident somewhere and guess who has to clear up the mess? Yep. You. Look out for the flashing sirens on your message bar and the helicopter landing outside.



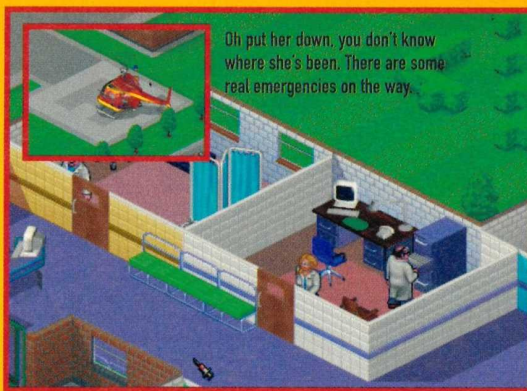
How many? If they need to get to the other side of your hospital you're in trouble.



The key to getting emergencies dealt with quickly is to prioritise your queues.



The psychopath ward. I mean psychiatric ward. Judging by the state of these people I was right the first time.



Oh put her down, you don't know where she's been. There are some real emergencies on the way.

BUILD YOUR OWN NHS



Start off with your reception desk. The doctors need something to lean on when they're chatting up the receptionist.



Build a GP's office and a general diagnosis room. Then put some benches down so that you can make people queue for hours.



The Pharmacy comes next, complete with a cute little Miss Whiplash-style nurse to make people take their medicine.



As your GPs actually manage to find out what's wrong with people you'll need to build the relevant treatment rooms.



You'll need some specialist help to deal with the real headaches that turn up from time to time. These guys cost more.



Then you have to build somewhere for them all to recover, or wait for treatment. You can lose beds if you lose money.

Fair enough, but it conveniently forgets to tell you what the problems are and it's practically impossible to tell just by watching the goings-on on-screen. Harumph. Fume. Ah well.

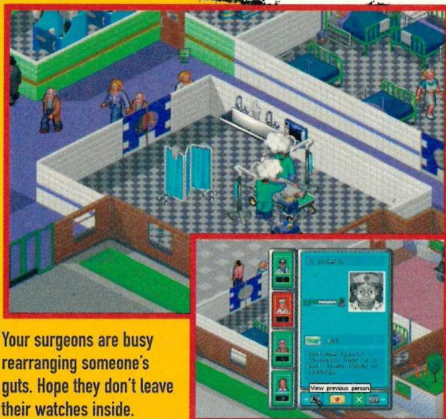
This aside though, there are certainly enough variables to tinker with and enough illnesses and machines to research to keep any veteran of seven series' of Casually banging away. Although be warned, the game plays more like Carry on Doctor than a serious attempt at reproducing the problems that hospitals face.

With new elements introduced to each and every level there is always something new to see in *Theme Hospital* and there will always be something that raises a smile at every stage of the game. It's a lot less serious and more focused than *Theme Park* and tons more fun to play. And let's

face it, since when has something like the running of the National Health Service ever been a serious business. *Theme Hospital* is certainly not the most original game you'll ever play but it more than makes up for it with some imaginative gameplay and quirks.

Les Ellis

Date	Details	Out	In	Balance
1 Aug	VIP Cash Award		1200	12716
12 Aug	Wipe Staff	178	112	12638
20 Aug	Treat: General Practice		800	11838
24 Aug	Treat: Staped Flies	100	130	11968
24 Aug	Treat: Drug Coat		130	12098
30 Aug	Treat: General Practice	213	130	11915
31 Aug	Insurance: Bealleaf Ltd		325	12240
1 Sep	Buying: Coats	500		11740
4 Sep	Treat: General Practice		113	11853
4 Sep	Treat: Drug Ward		113	11966
11 Sep	Treat: General Practice		113	12079
11 Sep	Treat: Drug Ward		113	12192
18 Sep	Buy: Object	30		12162
18 Sep	Buy: Object	202		11960
21 Sep	Build: Room	2270	113	9793
24 Sep	Treat: General Practice		113	9906
24 Sep	Wipe Staff	181	800	10725
24 Sep	Treat: TV Personalities		113	10838
30 Sep	Treat: General Practice		800	10038
30 Sep	Treat: TV Personalities		800	9238
30 Sep	Treat: Drink Machine	279		8959
30 Sep	Insurance: Norfolk Onion		100	9059
30 Sep	Rebuild: Coats		100	9159
Current Balance				25599



Your surgeons are busy rearranging someone's guts. Hope they don't leave their watches inside.

Left: The invisible man comes in early on. Of course, your docs can't see him. Ha-ha!



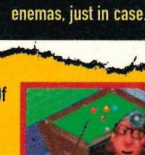
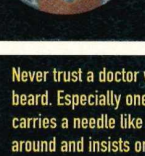
Pop. There goes another big head.



Never trust a doctor with a beard. Especially one that carries a needle like this around and insists on doing enemas, just in case.

Operate

Couple of steak knives and a hammer just in case they wake up. That'll do it.



THIS WON'T HURT A BIT

Anyone who has been to a casualty department lately will know all about the lovely hi-tech machines they use (unless you go to the my local where they have only just discovered how to use beds - here are the stories for ya).

Casting couch

Broken bone? After a doc who hasn't evolved from the gorilla stage pulls you around to find what hurts you'll go here to have ten tons of plaster wrapped around the wrong limb.



Body scan

Just strip off and step into this. Ignore the nurse who bursts out laughing as you remove the last item of clothing and realise you didn't put clean cacks on.



X-ray cooker

Takes a picture of the inside of your body. Can also do a nice reheated pizza in under five minutes. Doesn't do your eyes much good which is why the nurse stands behind a screen.



Cardio torture

Measure how fit you are and what condition your body is in. Which probably won't be very good after a few hours on this. Bit like running a marathon and doing a lap of honour.



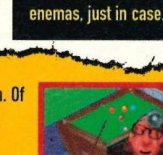
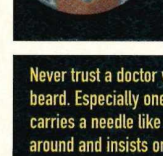
Bloated head

Isn't real, thank god. Although if the powers that be at my local see this they will probably invest in one to cure Athlete's Foot. They're usually that accurate with their diagnosis.



Operate

Couple of steak knives and a hammer just in case they wake up. That'll do it.



THEME HOSPITAL
VERSION REVIEWED PC
NO. OF PLAYERS 1 to 4
FROM Bullfrog/EA
PRICE \$40
AVAILABLE Out Now

GRAPHICS

Crisp in hi-res with a lot of mode for low-end PCs. Nicely detailed and suited to the game.

97

SOUNDS

Fun music and plenty of funny sound effects (use your imagination) to accompany the action.

80

GAMEPLAY

Not hugely varied from level-to-level but lots of fun to play with plenty going on.

86

LIFESPAN

The levels get bloody tough and there's plenty of replay value. The fun adds so much more to it.

90

OVERALL

88

JUDGEMENT

Superior to Theme Park but feels a tad dated. Plenty of fun though, you won't be disappointed.