



# Getting ready for surgery: A guide for parents



**UR**  
MEDICINE

**GOLISANO**  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

MEDICINE *of* THE HIGHEST ORDER





Having surgery is a big deal—both for your child, and for you. This booklet will help you get the information you need to be there for your child. Take a few minutes to read it. It will help you and your child both feel more relaxed and ready for surgery.

## Getting Ready for Your Child's Procedure

Here are a few things to take care of in the days and weeks leading up to surgery.

### **Make arrangements for:**

- Transportation to and from the hospital.
- Childcare for any other children.

### **Stock up on:**

- Over-the-counter pain medicine such as Tylenol and Motrin.
- Popsicles, apple juice, and other bland foods.
- Quiet activities (coloring books, movies, books and video games).

### **Contact the Hospital:**

- If you would like to take a hospital tour: call 585-275-9878.
- If your child has special needs: contact the Child Life Office at 585-275-9878 for special concerns or arrangements.

### **Make sure your child:**

- Feels prepared, calm, and confident using our online resources, books, and this guide. More information is on our website: [Golisano.urmc.edu/surgery-guide](http://Golisano.urmc.edu/surgery-guide).

# On the Day Before Surgery

We will call you with your child's arrival time. You can expect a call from us between 3pm and 6pm the day before surgery. If your child's surgery is scheduled for a Monday, we will call between 3pm and 6pm on the Friday before the surgery.

If your child is feeling sick the day before surgery, please call us at 585-276-3110.

During the cold and flu season, some visitor restrictions will be in place. Please check with the hospital prior to arrival for more details.

## Make sure your child:

- Follows the eating and drinking instructions found on page 3.
- Bathes or showers before going to bed. Use CHG wipes if directed by your surgeon.
- Has removed all nail polish, jewelry, and make-up. Children who use contact lenses should wear glasses to the hospital

## Pack:

- A change of clothes. If your child is staying the night, pack a small overnight bag. You will need to keep your child's belongings with you during the procedure.
- A comfort item for your child like a stuffed animal, music player, or video game.
- For younger children, bring an empty sippy cup or other favorite cup.
- Containers for glasses, contacts and retainers.
- Activities to do in the waiting room.
- Your child's vaccine record, insurance card, and a list of current medications.
- Court paperwork for guardianship, if applicable.

# Eating & Drinking Instructions

It is very important to follow these instructions. It is necessary for your child's stomach to be completely empty to prevent serious problems. Not following these instructions is dangerous and we will need to reschedule your child's surgery for another day.

## Midnight on day of surgery:

- Food is not allowed after midnight.
- Clear liquids such as apple juice, water, Pedialyte, and Gatorade are still allowed.

## 6 hours before arrival:

- Stop feeding infant formula now
- Clear liquids are still allowed

## 4 hours before arrival:

- Stop breast feeding now.

Do not eat after midnight	Ok up to 6 hours before arrival
	
Any solid food	Formula

Ok up to 4 hours before arrival	Ok up to 3 hours before arrival
	
Breast milk	Clear liquids

## 3 hours before arrival

- Absolutely nothing to eat or drink now, including candy, mints, gum, and cough drops.

# The Day of Your Child's Surgery

The day of your child's surgery can be stressful. But there are ways to help it run smoothly. Have your child wear comfortable clothing. Do your very best to arrive on time. And check out this quick summary of what to expect:

## The Hospital Parking Garage

- Park your car, and remember where you parked. Leave any heavy belongings or overnight bags in your car so you have less to carry.

## The Hospital Lobby

- Once inside, follow the Green tags on the ceiling to the Green elevators. Take the elevator to the basement level. Follow the hallway with kites and clouds to the Pediatric Family Waiting Room.

## The Pediatric Surgical Check-in and Family Waiting Room

- Check in at the registration desk and receive your child's tracking number. You can use this number to track your child's location while keeping his or her name private from others.
- A nurse will call your child's name and take you to the Pre-Anesthesia Room. The nurse will check your child's vital signs (like temperature) and ask you some general questions.

## The Pre-Anesthesia Room

- Your child and up to two adults will receive matching ID bracelets. For the safety and privacy of our patients, only adults with matching bracelets will be allowed to visit in the recovery room.
- Your child will change into hospital pajamas and socks.  
If your surgeon had you use CHG wipes the night before, you will use a second set at the hospital.
- Girls who have started their period will need to give a urine sample before surgery.
- Your anesthesia team will come to meet with you, discuss the plan, and answer your questions.
- A special team of doctors (anesthesiologists) and nurses (nurse anesthetists) will provide medications to help your child sleep.
- If you have not done so already, you will sign a consent form for the procedure.
- The surgeon will come to see you and mark the procedure site with a special marker.
- Older children (generally 12 years and older) will have an IV placed before the procedure. Younger children will use a special mask to begin their anesthesia, and have an IV placed once asleep. Our Child Life Specialist will help explain this to your child.
- Once your child goes to the operating room, you are welcome to wait in the Pediatric Family Waiting Room.

## The Pediatric Surgical Check-in and Waiting Room

- We recommend you bring something to do while you wait. such as a book or electronic device with headphones. As a consideration to other children who are still waiting for their procedure, eating is not allowed in the waiting room.
- You will be able to track your child's location on the tracking screen in the waiting room.
- If you need to step out, please leave a phone number where you can be reached with the secretary.
- Once your child's procedure is done, the surgeon will give you an update.



- We know being away from your child can be stressful and scary We will make sure you are brought in to see your child as soon as it is possible and safe.



## The Recovery Room

- Only the two adults with identification bracelets will be allowed in the recovery room.
- Younger children tend to cry after they come out of anesthesia. Do not worry if you hear other children crying –focus on your child.
- Be patient. Children wake up from anesthesia differently. Refrain from trying to wake your child. Children are more comfortable if they wake up on their own.
- Anesthesia may cause an itchy nose. Remind your child not to rub his or her face to avoid eye injuries.



- Your child may look pale, swollen or drowsy. Oxygen may be given to help your child's recovery. These things are normal. Nurses will be monitoring your child's vital signs to keep him or her safe.
- Pain after surgery is common. We will do everything we can to keep your child as comfortable as possible. If your child is in pain, please tell your nurse.
- Recovery room times vary. Most children will only spend about one hour in recovery. Others will need to be monitored for a few hours before going home or to their room for the night

- Your child must meet certain requirements before going home—like having pain under control and being awake and alert.
- If you are going home, your nurse will go over specific discharge needs.

## Home

- Your child will probably be sleepy for the rest of the day, and may nap again after arriving home.
- Follow the discharge instructions you were given about eating, drinking, prescriptions, what to watch for and follow-up appointments.
- Refer to your discharge instructions for information on who to call if you have questions.

## Easing Fears

You may find it hard to talk to your child about surgery. But talking it through will go a long way towards easing your child's fears. The more you talk, the more prepared you both will feel—and the better your overall experience will be.

- Recognize their fears. Whether or not they're willing to admit it, many children are scared of going to the hospital. Take the time to sit down and ask what your child thinks about surgery. Ask what your child is afraid of. Establish a conversation. You'll be able to address some of the worst fears right off the bat.
- Describe the experience. Use sensory cues – what your child will see, hear and smell – to make things feel less scary and unfamiliar. If you choose, you can describe what anesthesia will be like (falling asleep), but try to avoid any details about the actual surgery unless your child asks about them.
- Be honest. You don't need to go into detail about everything. But let your child know you take his or her fears seriously. Use language your child can understand. Be gentle and reassuring.
- Ask for help. We can help you have this conversation with your child. We can also give you and your child a tour. Let us know how we can help. Call us at 585-275-9878.

For age-related info on preparing your child, check out the tips on the next page.

### Tips for Infants (0-12 months)

- Infants can feel tension in your body. Make sure you are mentally prepared and relaxed for your baby's surgery.
- Your baby will not be able to understand why he or she cannot eat. You can comfort or distract your baby by:
  - Bringing a favorite security item.
  - Rocking.
  - Swaddling.
  - Singing.
  - Massaging.
  - Bringing a sippy cup or bottle for after the surgery.

### Tips for Toddlers (1-3 years)

- Tell your toddler about the surgery 1-2 days ahead of time.
- Remind your child that surgery is not a punishment for "being bad."
- Show your child there is nothing to be afraid of: Have the nurse check your blood pressure and temperature before checking your child's. Explain what is about to happen before it occurs..
- Be patient. Toddlers tend to be fussy in the hospital. If you stay calm it will help your child to stay calm.

### Tips for Preschoolers (3-5 years)

- Prepare your preschooler 3 days ahead of time.
- Explain that lots of children go see the doctors at the hospital and that it is a safe place.
- Give simple explanations without many details
- Reassure your child that the surgery is to help them to get well—and not because your child did anything wrong.

### Tips for School-Age (5-12 years)

- Prepare your child 1-2 weeks ahead of time.
- Ask open-ended questions like, "Can you tell me what you are worried about?"
- Be honest. Tell your child what he or she will hear, see and feel in the hospital.
- Talk about benefits to the surgery like, "Once your knee is better you can play hockey again."

- School-age children often worry about waking up during the surgery, or even losing body parts. If this comes up, explain that the doctors are very smart – they know what parts need surgery, and just how much medicine will keep your child asleep until the surgery is over.

### Tips for Adolescents (13-18 years)

- Adolescents tend to worry about pain, privacy, and how surgery will affect their appearance and daily lives. Give complete, honest details about the surgery.
- Help give your teenager a sense of control by:
  - Involving him or her in choices about care.
  - Bring music and a phone for texting friends.
  - Encouraging your teen to write down questions for the doctor.
  - Respect your teen's privacy when possible.

## Tips for Teens

### Staying in the Loop

One of the hardest parts of going through surgery – besides the surgery – is feeling like you are missing out. But there are plenty of ways to stay connected. Here's what you can do:

- Keep your phone with you to text or call your friends from the hospital. If you have a data plan, tweet or post on Facebook. (Just don't forget your charger.)
- Tell your teachers and your friends that you are having surgery. Let them know if you'll be missing school. You can get a friend to take notes and drop off your homework for you., While your friends cannot visit you in the recovery room, they can always come visit once you are home!



- Talk to your parents. No matter what, make sure your parents are on board with your plans for staying in touch with friends. Before doing anything, get the okay from them.

### Feeling Worried?

Surgery is an advanced science. And any surgery that is not an emergency surgery (like appendicitis or a broken bone) is planned well in advance. But it is still normal to feel a little nervous. So if you are feeling worried, try one of the following:

- Sit down with a pen and paper and write down what you're worried about. You might realize that this is not as scary as you thought!
- Do some research. Call and ask us questions. Or come in for a tour. You can have your parents set it up by calling 585-275-9878. You may realize many of your fears are from not knowing what will happen. Getting a sense for the day of your surgery will make it less scary.
- Write down any questions you have for the doctor and bring them to the hospital. And if you think of new ones on the spur of the moment, ask those too! Our doctors are here to make you feel better – both physically, and emotionally.

### Privacy

We'll let you in on a little secret: nobody likes wearing hospital gowns. We will do our best to make sure you feel comfortable, but here are some things you can do to help:

- Speak up if something makes you uncomfortable. As long as it does not interfere with the surgery, we are happy to help.
- Pull the curtains. Our split rooms and recovery room have curtains that can be pulled around the bed. They might not be as good as walls, but they help! Ask your parents or nurse to close them.
- Bring some music. Music is a great way to have a sense of privacy. If you are feeling overwhelmed, do not hesitate to plug in and tune out. Just remember to bring earphones.

## Additional Info

### Child Life Specialists

The Child Life Specialists at Golisano Children's Hospital are trained to care for the emotional and developmental needs of children and families. They are available to:

- Help ease your child's fears.
- Prepare and support you and your child through surgery.

- Provide pre-admission tours.
- Help accommodate any special needs your child may have.

To contact a Child Life Specialist, call the Child Life Office at 585-275-9878.

### Food & Drink

#### Finger Lakes Coffee Cart – Two locations

1. Take the Green elevators to the 1st floor. Turn left and walk up the ramp. The coffee shop will be on your left.
2. Take the Green or Red elevators to the 1st floor and head to the Main Lobby.

#### Café 601

Take the Red elevators to the 1st floor. Take a left, a quick right, and follow the signs with the fork and knife.

### Outpatient Pharmacy & Gift Shop

The Pharmacy and Gift Shop are both in the Main Lobby. They are across from the Main Information Desk.

## We're Here For You

You can do this. And remember: we are always here to help.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's healthcare. If you have any other questions or would like more information on your child's surgery, please refer to the contact numbers below.

#### Contact Numbers

Pediatric Surgical Suite	585-276-3110
Pediatric Surgical Suite FAX	585-276-2336
Child Life Office	585-275-9878
To Schedule a Tour	585-275-9878



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