

Pediatric Surgery

Preparation for Children and their Families



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO
MEDICINE

Comer Children's Hospital

AT THE FOREFRONT OF KIDS' MEDICINE™

What is Surgery ?

The simplest way to explain surgery to your child is to tell him/her that something with their body needs to be fixed or changed.

Who Will You and Your Child Meet on the Day of Surgery?

You will meet many people on the day of surgery. The team is a group of doctors and nurses who will work together to safely monitor and care for your child. They will be available to answer any questions you may have.

A Child Life Specialist is available to provide preparation for your child's surgery or procedure and distraction to minimize anxiety. If you would like to request child life services during your visit, please call 773-702-1230 in advance with questions or ask our staff to page the specialist when you arrive.

What Will Happen When Your Child Comes for Surgery?

- Upon arrival, you will check in at the reception desk. You will be directed to a private room, called a pre-op room.
- When your child is ready to be seen. You and your child are welcome to bring a favorite toy or activity to provide comfort throughout your child's visit.
- Prior to your child's surgery, the nurses will:
 - Weigh your child on a scale.
 - Take your child's temperature.
 - Place a special sticker on your child's finger to measure his/her oxygen level.
 - Take your child's blood pressure on either the arm or leg.
 - Ask questions regarding your child's medical history.
- The rest of the medical team will come see you to review aspects of your child's care.
- You and your family will wait in the pre-op room until it is time for your child's surgery.
- Toys are available for your child if he/she would like something to play with.
- When your child goes to surgery, you will return to the waiting room.

What Will Happen After Your Child's Surgery ?

- You will be directed to the recovery area to be with your child as he/she wakes up.
- Water, juice, and popsicles will be offered to help hydrate your child.
- For same day surgeries, the recovery nurse will provide information regarding at-home care.
- If being admitted, your child will remain in the recovery area until it is time to be taken to the hospital room.






Supporting Your Child Before Surgery

How You Can Help...



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CHILD'S AGE	STRESSORS	HOW TO HELP PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SURGERY
INFANTS: Birth– 18 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruption to parent-child relationship • Over-stimulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring your baby's favorite comfort item or toy. • Remaining patient and calm can help reduce your baby's anxiety.
TODDLERS: 18 months – 2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation anxiety – fear of strangers • Afraid of medical equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical play with dolls or stuffed animals using a pretend doctor's kit. • Give very simple explanations (i.e., “The doctors and nurses are going to help your ears feel better”). • Bring comfort items that will help your child feel secure and relaxed.
PRESCHOOL: 3-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of needles & shots • Magical thinking (i.e., being in the hospital=punishment) • Fear of abandonment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your child about surgery the night before. • Be honest with your child about what will happen, using simple terms he/she can understand (i.e., “The doctor is going to give you special sleepy medicine so you do not feel anything while they take care of you”). • Let your child decide what comfort items he/she wants to bring to the hospital.
SCHOOL-AGE: 6-10 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear loss of control • Disruption to daily life (i.e., school and friends) • Fear of pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your child about surgery a few days before. • Make sure your child has a clear understanding of why he/she needs surgery. • Allow your child to participate in the process by encouraging her/him to ask questions. • Let your child know that it's okay to feel scared or nervous about the surgery.
TEEN: 11 & Up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for body image and physical changes • Loss of control and privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the surgery a week or 2 before. • Allow your child to be part of the decision-making process whenever possible. • Provide concrete information about the surgery and encourage your child to ask questions.