

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

How do I prepare my child for planned surgery?

Pre surgery wash

- Your child needs to be bathed either the night before or on the day of surgery, to reduce the chance of infection.
- If your child is having surgery on their spine, heart, or head you need to wash their hair the night before or on the day of surgery.
- Your child must have their hair checked for head lice at least two days before surgery and be treated if necessary. This is to ensure that your child's hair is free from head lice and to prevent head lice spreading.
- Your child's fingernails and toenails should be clean and free from nail polish. Nail polish may get in the way of the monitors that gently clip onto your child's finger to keep track of their pulse.

Clean and appropriate clothing for surgery

- Your child needs to be dressed in clean pyjamas or a hospital gown just before going to surgery. The nurses will advise you when to change your child.
- If your infant or child wears nappies they should have their nappy changed just before they go for their surgery.
- All makeup and jewellery including earrings, metal hairclips and hair elastics that contain metal should be removed. It is best to leave your child's jewellery and other valuables at home.

What to bring for your child's day surgery

Make sure you have everything listed below ready to show hospital staff:

- Your child's personal health record, such as their blue book, immunisation record and any other health summaries you may have
- Medicare card
- Health insurance details or evidence of current fund membership
- A list of medications or treatments your child is currently receiving, as well as the medications themselves to show hospital staff
- Any equipment which your child needs to aid mobility, feeding or communication
- Your family doctor's name, address and phone number
- Your general paediatrician's name, address and phone number if your child sees one regularly
- Any relevant x-rays and results from pathology tests.

What to bring for overnight stays

For overnight stays, there are some additional things to bring:

- Clothes (including pyjamas and slippers), shoes
- Soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush
- A favourite toy or comforter, colouring pencils or games
- School books/homework (the hospital has a school run by the Department of Education and Training)
- Special dietary formula
- Money for your meals, parking and accommodation
- Change for phones or phone cards

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- Storage space on the wards is limited so please do not bring too much with you.
 - We recommend you leave valuables at home as the Hospital cannot accept responsibility for any lost belongings.

Fasting for patients having an anaesthetic

Fasting means not eating or drinking for a certain amount of time. It is very important for your child to fast before surgery. If your child has food or fluid in their stomach during an anaesthetic they may vomit, which could then enter the windpipe or the lungs. Your child must have nothing to eat or drink (not even a sip of water from the time you are told to fast). Please check the fasting times with the nurses.

Operating theatre

If the anaesthetist agrees, one parent may be allowed into the anaesthetic room to stay until your child falls asleep. When your child is asleep, you will be asked to wait in the Parent Waiting Room, which is next to the Recovery Ward.

When your child's operation has finished, you will be called to the Recovery Ward to sit with your child as they wake up from the anaesthetic. Only parents and carers are allowed into the Recovery Ward (no brothers or sisters).

After the anaesthetic it is quite normal for some children to become upset. This does not necessarily mean they are in pain and they will usually settle down after a little while. Some children remain drowsy after an anaesthetic — it is best to let them sleep. If your child does feel pain after the procedure or surgery, they will be given pain relief medication as required.

When is my child able to eat and drink?

Depending on the type of procedure/operation, food and drink will be slowly given to your child. The medical and nursing staff will tell you when your child may start to eat and drink.

Going home (when your child is discharged)

Your doctor or nurse will let you know when your child can go home (be discharged) and arrange for any necessary follow-up appointments.

Other important things to remember

- When your child is having surgery, please bring their favourite teddy or security blanket for added comfort.
- Please make sure that you bring your child's regular medications and blue book with you on the day of surgery. If your child is on regular medication, please tell the doctor at the time of consultation as some medications need to be stopped before surgery.
- Your child will need to stop eating and drinking for a few hours before surgery and it is important to follow the fasting times given to you by the doctor/nurse. If your child does eat or drink when they are not meant to, please tell the nurse as soon as possible.