

# Getting Ready

## *for Outpatient Surgery*

at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

---

*A handbook for parents before, during and after your child's surgery.*



*Dear Parent or Guardian,*

*Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh is pleased to offer you and your child a wide array of diagnostic and surgical procedures at Children's Hospital in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh.*

*Remember, any procedure that involves anesthesia or sedation requires the skills of highly trained health care professionals and your assistance and understanding as a parent or guardian.*

*This booklet is intended to answer questions that you and your child may have before, during and after your child's surgery. Please keep it handy until after your child's surgery, and feel free to call us with any questions at 412-692-5240.*

*Thank you!*

*Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh*

*Same Day Surgery Center*

*Ph: 412-692-5240*

*Fx: 412-692-6180*

## Getting Ready – The Weeks Before

There are many things you can do to help prepare yourself and your child for admission for outpatient surgery at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh.

- Follow the “under-the-weather” policy. Call the surgeon’s office if your child has a fever or flu-like symptoms the day before surgery. If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, impetigo or lice up to three weeks before the surgery, call the surgeon’s office.
- Do not plan any other activities for the day of your child’s surgery.

### *Medications & Food*

- Do not allow your child to have any aspirin or ibuprofen for at least two weeks before the surgery. This includes Motrin®, PediaProfen®, Advil®, Bayer® children’s aspirin, Aspergum®, Pepto-Bismol® and Alka-Seltzer Cold Plus®. Your child may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®).
- If your child is older than 12 months of age, he or she should not eat any solid food or drink any non-clear liquids after midnight. This includes milk, juices with pulp, coffee, chewing gum, candy or tooth-brushing. Your child may drink clear liquids up to two hours before the scheduled arrival time. Clear liquids include water, Pedialyte™, Kool-Aid® and juices you can see through, such as apple juice.
- Check with your doctor to see whether there are any prescription or non-prescription medications that your child should avoid taking or stop taking temporarily before his or her surgery.

### *Forms & Insurance*

- You will receive two forms in the mail or at the physician’s office: the History and Physical form and the Consent form. Please remember to bring your completed History and Physical and Consent forms with you on the day of your child’s surgery.
- Check with your insurance carrier to determine whether you need written authorization before receiving the scheduled services. To make sure you receive the insurance coverage to which you are entitled, please notify your insurance company or health maintenance organization (HMO) of your child’s type and date of surgery before coming to the hospital. If you have questions about insurance requirements, ask your child’s primary care physician or call Children’s Patient Access staff at 412-692-5310.
- If blood work was ordered by your child’s doctor or surgeon, make sure it is completed. Bring the results with you, or have them sent to the Same Day Surgery Center via fax. The fax number is 412-692-6180.

### *Transportation & Child Care*

- Make sure you have appropriate transportation home from the hospital. Your child should avoid public transportation (bus or trolley) immediately after surgery. Either drive or arrange for a relative or friend to take you and your child home.
- Please make child care plans for your other children for the day of surgery.

Write down any questions or concerns you may have. It may be easier than trying to remember them.

Prepare your child for surgery by talking to him or her and allowing your child to ask questions. See the guidelines on page 6. We encourage you and your child to take a free Pre-Admission Tour. (See page 7.)

## Getting Ready – The Day Before

- Your child should not receive any vaccines the day before surgery.
- One business day before your child's procedure, you will receive a call from a surgery nurse between 1 and 9 p.m. The nurse will ask several questions about your child's medical history, current medications and readiness for the particular procedure. He or she also will answer any questions you have and will give you the important instructions you and your child need to follow. Please have paper and pen ready to write down instructions.
- The surgery nurse will provide you with instructions for eating and drinking. To promote the safety of your child, it is important to follow these specific times for eating and drinking. Remember: If your child does eat or drink after the scheduled times, his or her surgery may be rescheduled for another day.
- If your child takes medications regularly, including herbal or nutritional supplements, please inform the surgery nurse during the pre-procedure phone call.
- Directions to Children's will be provided, if you need them. A map is included in this booklet. Or, you may visit our Web site at [www.chp.edu](http://www.chp.edu) for a map and directions.
- If your child has special needs, please inform the surgery nurse.
- The surgery nurse will provide you with an arrival time for the day of surgery. Remember: This is your arrival time, not your child's surgery time.
- If you have any questions or concerns prior to your child's surgery, or if you are not contacted by 9 p.m. the day before your child's surgery, call the same day surgery nurse at 412-692-5242 or, after 10 p.m., the Children's operator at 412-692-5325 and have the same day surgery nurse paged.

## Getting Ready – The Night Before

- Please be sure that your child has a bath or shower and his or her hair is washed the night before the procedure.
- Have your child remove all nail polish and jewelry, including all piercings.
- Discuss the next day's events with your child in terms that he or she can understand. Be careful to inform, but not alarm. See page 6.
- Collect everything you need to bring the next day.

### Things To Bring Checklist

- Any papers provided by your child's doctor, including the History and Physical form and the Consent form
- Legal guardianship papers
- Insurance company authorization, if required by your insurer
- Insurance card and Social Security card
- Storage cases for your child's eyeglasses, contact lenses and/or orthodontic retainer
- Favorite security object from home (pacifier, toy, blanket, Walkman, etc.)
- Preferred bottle, sippy cup or sports bottle

If you are not the biological parent (natural mother or father) of the child, you must bring copies of court documents of your legal right to give consent for the procedure and anesthesia. If you have any questions, please contact the social worker for the surgical service that cares for your child by calling 412-692-5255.

## Before the Surgery or Procedure

There are many things you can do to help prepare yourself and your child for admission for outpatient surgery at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh.

### *Getting There*

- Dress your child in loose-fitting, two-piece clothing such as sweats. If you wish, you may bring your child to the center in pajamas.
- Allow adequate time for travel and parking. Arriving late may cause delays in the surgery schedule for your child, and his or her procedure may need to be rescheduled.
- Park at a designated Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh parking lot, and bring your parking ticket to be validated when you check in.

### *At Children’s*

- The nursing staff will check your child’s height, weight and vital signs and will review preoperative information and consents.
- A member of the Anesthesia Team will speak with you.
- One parent must remain with your child at all times. Parents of children admitted for diagnostic procedures will be given specific information about the procedure being performed.
- After you have met with the health care team members, you and your child may visit the playroom until your child’s surgeon is ready.

### *Several steps will be taken to ensure your child’s safety.*

- You will be asked to sign an informed consent form, which verifies that you and your doctor have discussed the surgery that is to be performed on your child, the expectations that you have of each other, and the risks associated with the surgery.
- The staff members responsible for your child’s care will verify your child’s identification by name and birth date, the specific surgery he or she is having, and the part of your child’s body on which the surgery is to be performed. You will be asked these questions several times. The staff members will double-check the answers you give them against documents provided by your doctor and any preoperative assessments.
- Depending on the type of surgery your child is having, the surgeon or another member of your health care team will mark the correct location on your child’s body on which the procedure is to be performed. Called side-site marking, this is a critical step in ensuring your child’s safety. For example, if your child is having a right ear tube placed, the surgeon will make a mark on the right ear.
- Ask the doctor if he or she plans to take a “time out” with the surgical team just before beginning your child’s surgery. During the time out, the members of the health care team again verify the correct procedure and the correct side-site on your child.

## The Surgery or Procedure

### *How long will it take?*

The total length of stay varies with each child and depends in part on the type of procedure and the time it takes your child to recover. Your child's surgery or procedure includes spending some time in the surgical holding and play area, which is where children wait before going into the Operating Room. Please do not schedule other appointments or activities for the day of surgery. The length of your child's stay may vary.

When it is time to go into the Operating Room, your child may become upset. Our staff is very experienced in comforting children during separation. To help make it easier:

- Be honest with your child.
- Let your child know where you will be waiting. Reassure your child that you will see him or her when the procedure is over.
- Allow your child to express his or her feelings, even if he or she wants to cry.
- If your child would be more comfortable, please make arrangements for your clergy to visit.



One parent/legal guardian must remain in the designated waiting area at all times during surgery. Your child's surgeon may need to contact you.

The family liaison nurse can assist you with concerns and provide updates while your child is in the Operating Room.

Vending machines and coffee are available. We suggest that you have a snack before going to the Recovery Room.

## After the Surgery or Procedure

After your child's procedure is completed, he or she will be taken to the Recovery Room until the effects of anesthesia begin to wear off. You will be called to the Recovery Room once your child is awake. The length of time your child spends in the Recovery Room will vary with the procedure and the child. A maximum of two adults are permitted in the Recovery Room. Siblings and other children are not permitted in the Recovery Room or any other patient care areas within Same Day Surgery.

- Children who are scheduled to stay overnight will be assigned an inpatient room. One parent may sleep overnight with your child, if desired.
- Children who are going home will return to the Same Day Surgery Center's post-op unit to be prepared for discharge. Remember to follow up with your doctor about any therapy or medications your child may need for his or her recovery, and when your child can resume certain activities including school.

After surgery, your doctor or nurse will ask about any pain your child may have. Whenever your child is asked to take a medication, especially a new one, ask what it is for and its side effects. This will ensure that you are kept informed. If you have questions or concerns about any medication, ask the doctor or nurse.

School or employment excuses are available upon request.

## Caring for Your Child After Surgery

Prepare in advance by buying a supply of clear liquids such as ginger ale, Popsicles®, apple juice, etc., before the day of the procedure so you will have something to offer your child to drink afterwards.

Have your child eat lightly for the next meal. Restaurant meals, especially fast food, are not recommended on the day of surgery.

Keep the discharge instructions on your refrigerator or near the telephone. Call your surgeon if you have any questions or if problems arise.

You will receive a follow-up phone call to check on your child's progress the next business day.



## Guidelines To Help Your Child Prepare for Surgery

### *1–6 years*

If your child is between the ages of 1 and 3, it is best to wait until the morning of surgery to discuss the procedure. Give brief but honest explanations using simple, carefully chosen words. Words such as “fix” and “make it better” are less threatening than “cut,” “incision” and “take out.” Reassure your child that the surgery or diagnostic procedure is not a punishment. Do not threaten your child with a medical procedure or with doctors or nurses. Emphasize that eating and drinking before surgery will make your child sick. For children from 3 to 6 years old, encourage pretending and role-playing. If possible, read books with your child about going to the hospital and having an operation.

### *7–12 years*

Many of the guidelines for younger children apply to children of this age; however, you should discuss the surgery and hospitalization before the day of surgery. Give a matter-of-fact explanation of the procedure and why it needs to be done. Allow your child to ask questions and discuss his or her fears with you. Reassure your child that he or she will stay asleep for the entire surgery. Tell your child that it is all right to cry if something is uncomfortable.

### *13–18 years*

Reassure your teenager that his or her privacy will be respected as much as possible and that all information is kept in confidence. Give detailed answers to questions, and encourage your teenager to ask questions of the doctor and nurse. Reinforce that it is all right to cry. Don't refer to him or her as a “baby” for crying or having fears. Allow as much independence as possible.

If you have questions about preparing your child emotionally for surgery, please contact a specialist in Children's Child Life Department at 412-692-6103 or 412-692-6366.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Why can't my child eat or drink before surgery?***

The safest way for your child to receive anesthesia is on an empty stomach. This means no chewing gum, candy, milk, tooth-brushing or water. Eating or drinking after the restricted times given to you by the surgery nurse may cause a delay of up to eight hours, or having to reschedule your child's surgery.

### ***What if my child has a cold or is exposed to a disease before surgery?***

If your child develops a cold or flu-like symptoms a day or two before surgery; or if your child has been around someone who has measles, chicken pox, shingles or mumps within 21 days before the surgery; please contact the surgeon.

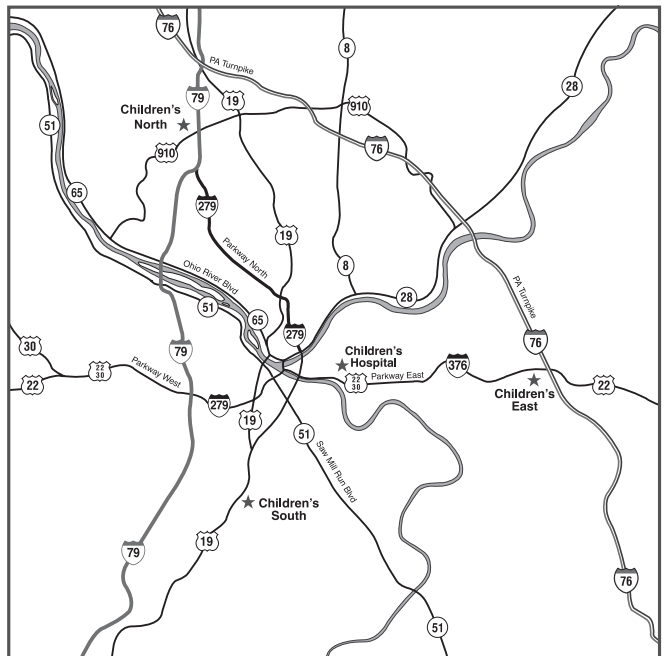
### ***Can a grandparent or stepparent sign consent for surgery?***

The only people permitted to sign surgery and anesthesia consent forms (legal documents) are legal parents or guardians. If you are not the biological or adoptive parent, but you do have guardianship of the child, please bring your legal proof of guardianship. If you have custody of the child, please contact your social worker or caseworker prior to the day of admission to assist you in this process.

## Outpatient Surgery Pre-Admission Tours

Having a surgery or procedure can be a challenging experience for children and parents, so Children's offers weekly pre-admission tours to help you prepare. The tours are conducted by a registered nurse and are focused on helping reduce the child's fear of the unknown. The children have the opportunity to have hands-on experience with the surgical and operating room equipment in a positive atmosphere. Brothers and sisters also are encouraged to attend. The tour takes about one hour.

Tours and parking are free. Tours are offered Sunday afternoons at 1 p.m. at Children's in Oakland. Individual weekday evening tours can be arranged for older children or for those families who cannot attend the Sunday tour.



Registration is required by calling 412-692-6366 or 412-692-7478.



# Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

## Same Day Surgery

3705 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2583  
Ph: 412-692-5240  
Fx: 412-692-6180

[www.chp.edu](http://www.chp.edu)



IF YOU HAVE KIDS,  
BE GLAD YOU HAVE CHILDREN'S.