

Northwest Community Hospital Pre-Operative Pediatric Instructions

Our goal is to provide safe, optimal conditions during your child's surgery and to make the entire surgical experience as pleasant and comfortable as possible. To achieve this goal, we need your cooperation in following these instructions carefully.

Preparing your child

It is important that you begin preparing your child for the operation as soon as the surgery has been scheduled. Children tolerate the whole surgical experience better when they are well prepared. Most children are reassured by knowing that they will be going home soon after their surgery. Sign up for a Pre-Surgical Tour so your child will be familiar with the sights and sounds of an operating room. Call 847.618.4YOU (4968) to register.

Children are encouraged to bring a favorite toy and/or blanket from home. Also, any special nipples for bottles, cups or pacifiers and diapers would be suggested. We will provide your child with a gown and slippers.

Anesthesia

Children sometimes require medicine to calm them before surgery. This medicine may be given by mouth, mixed in juice or soda, or by injection. The type of medicine given will be determined by the anesthesiologist. In most cases, children receive a general anesthetic. Some children are put to sleep by inhalation of an anesthetic through a mask. Other children are put to sleep with the use of an intravenous injection. The choice of which method to begin anesthesia will be made by the anesthesiologist based on many factors.

You will be able to stay with your child at all times except during the operation and during the initial phase of recovery. When your child awakens from the anesthesia, s/he will be transferred to the secondary recovery area where you can be with him/her again. Assure your child that when you cannot be with him/her, you will be waiting nearby.

After surgery

Your child's face may look flushed and feel warm for several hours due to the medication given before or during surgery. Children awaken from anesthesia at different rates. Some children may be fully alert upon arriving in the recovery room. Others may be drowsy for hours after surgery. With a general anesthetic, you may notice these behaviors:

- Alert one minute, then drowsy or dizzy the next
- Irritable for the remainder of the day

Nausea and vomiting are occasional side effects after surgery and anesthesia. You may offer your child clear liquids (such as apple juice, tea, Kool-Aid, Hi-C) or popsicles and increase the amount as tolerated. S/he will be the best judge in deciding when fluids or food may be tolerated.

Children should be watched carefully for 24 hours following surgery. Most parents report that their child is acting normally by evening and has resumed normal activities by the next day. If you have any questions regarding your child's surgical procedure and related care, please ask the surgeon, anesthesiologist or nurse.

Please arrange for another responsible adult to drive you and your child home. It is not safe to drive and care for your child at the same time.

Please review all additional instructions provided on eating, drinking and medications prior to surgery.

If you are unable to keep your appointment

If you are unable to keep your surgical appointment, please notify us as soon as possible. If your child develops a rash, fever, cough, cold or other illness, or if s/he has been exposed to a contagious disease such as chicken pox, measles or mumps, please call your doctor. It may be necessary to postpone surgery.

Visit nch.org under Pediatric Surgery for more suggestions and downloads.

