



# While you wait for your surgery

Unfortunately, waiting times have increased across the country. We are now working hard to ensure that children and young people get the care they need as quickly as possible.

While you are waiting, you can use any extra time in a positive way to help your child to be healthier before their surgery.

This can reduce the risk of complications, support their recovery and benefit their long-term health. Here are the ways that your child and whole family can be put yourself in the best place to have your surgery.

## Moving more

**“If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat.” – Chief Medical Officer for the UK**

National guidelines for physical activity recommend 180 minutes per day for pre-schoolers and 60 minutes per day for school-age children.

These websites have excellent resources to help children of all abilities to achieve these goals.

Moving Medicine: [www.movingmedicine.ac.uk/consultation-guides/patient-info-finder](http://www.movingmedicine.ac.uk/consultation-guides/patient-info-finder)

Change4Life: [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

## Eating more healthily

A healthy diet is important for a child's development and even more essential before an operation. Preventing iron deficiency can reduce the risk of requiring a blood transfusion and improve recovery after major surgery. Iron rich diets are the best way to make this happen or sometimes iron supplements are needed to top up iron levels.

You can read more about the benefits of iron rich diets by searching 'NHS BT iron in your diet'.

Find useful tips and ideas on eating more healthily at Change4Life: [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

## Getting control of asthma

Asthma is common in childhood and if poorly controlled it can cause problems during the anaesthetic. An assessment of control can be done using the Asthma Control Test ([www.asthmacontroltest.com](http://www.asthmacontroltest.com)). If support or improvements are required please seek advice from your GP or practice asthma nurse.

## Creating a smokefree home

Children who are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke are twice as likely to suffer airway or breathing problems during or after the operation. If you or a family member would like support stopping smoking visit the NHS website for advice and support.

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/take-steps-now-to-stop-smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/take-steps-now-to-stop-smoking)



## Keeping teeth healthy

Dental decay impacts on children's wellbeing, school attendance and can increase post-operative chest infections. It's important to have your child's teeth checked once a year and brush them twice a day with a fluoride tooth paste.

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth)

## Having a health check

If your child is aged over 14 years and has a learning disability, they can have a free annual health check once a year at your GP surgery.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/annual-health-checks](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/annual-health-checks)

## Getting the right vaccinations

It's important that children and adults have vaccines at the right time for the best protection. If you or your child have missed a vaccine, contact your GP to catch up.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them)

## Contact us

If you want to discuss any of the above with a member of the preoperative care team please call: 0114 305 8132.

### Disclaimer

Please note: this is a generic information sheet relating to care at Sheffield Children's NHS FT. These details may not reflect treatment at other hospitals. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professionals' instructions. If this resource relates to medicines, please read it alongside the medicine manufacturer's patient information leaflet. If this information has been translated into another language from English, efforts have been made to maintain accuracy, but there may still be some translation errors. If you are unsure about any of the guidance in this resource or have specific questions about how it relates to your child, always ask your healthcare professional for further advice.