

Spinal Surgery

Getting ready for Surgery

Unfortunately waiting times have increased due to the Covid-19 social distancing regulations necessary on the hospital site, and because, during the pandemic, we have been providing additional services to other hospitals in the region. As a result, the number of patients we would normally see has been limited.

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 ensure your child is as healthy as possible before their spinal surgery.

This can reduce the risk of complications, support their recovery and benefit their long-term health.



Introduction

The intention of this document is to provide some generic guidance for you to ensure that your child is in the best possible state of health prior to their spinal surgery with us.

If your child is likely to experience concerns, or may be frightened on the day of surgery, please let us know and we will aim to provide additional support. Specialist play therapists are available and they can assist your child in their hospital journey. And do please contact us if you have any questions regarding the equipment your child may need following their discharge from hospital.

Please bring a list of any medications your child is taking and discuss these with the team on the day of surgery. Certain types of medicines may need to be stopped for clinical reasons, including the combined oral contraceptive pill and certain anti-coagulant therapies up to six weeks before surgery. If you are on one of these medications, please contact pre-operative care team using the details below for advice.

It may be helpful for you to inform any professional involved in your child's care / schooling of the surgery to allow them to plan for your child's recovery.



By your side

Guidance for Parents

There are a number of things that you can do to ensure your child is as healthy as possible prior to their spinal surgery. These include:-

- Eating more healthily – A healthy diet is important to a child's development, and even more important prior to surgery. Preventing iron deficiency can reduce the risk of requiring a blood transfusion and improve recovery after surgery. Iron rich diets are the best way to achieve this, although sometimes iron supplements are necessary to top up iron levels; multivitamin supplements can also be useful in boosting iron levels and managing low levels of vitamin D.
- Getting control of asthma – Asthma is common in childhood and if poorly controlled can cause problems during the anaesthetic. An assessment of the level of control can be made using the Asthma Control Test (www.asthmacontroltest.com). If support or improvements are required please seek advice from your GP or practice asthma nurse.
- Creating a smoke-free home – Children 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 to stop smoking please visit the NHS website for advice and support.
- 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 twice each year and brush their teeth twice each day with 14,500 ppm fluoride toothpaste. The dentist will be able to apply a fluoride varnish 2 – 3 times per year to reduce the risk of cavities developing. Should any problems or pain arise please contact your dentist.
- Getting the right vaccinations – It's important that children and adults have vaccinations at the right time for best protection. If you or your child have missed a vaccine, contact your GP to catch up.
- Moving more – National guidelines for physical activity recommend 180 minutes per day for pre-schoolers and 60 minutes per day for school-age children.
- Having a health check – If your child is over 14 years of age and has a learning disability they can have a free annual health check at your GP surgery.



Health and wellbeing if you have to wait

- Patients may bring in nightwear, but no onesies please.
- Comfortable, loose clothing for discharge.
- Toiletries.
- Please bring your child's regular medications.
- If hoists are used please bring slings.



- Patients on non-invasive ventilation please bring along your equipment and or cough assist.
- You may bring along feeds for gastrostomy fed children; the Trust offers feeds for patients and will provide the pump and equipment.
- Female patients are advised to bring sanitary protection into hospital.
- You may bring along laptops/games etc. Please inform staff when you wish to charge any batteries to avoid fire hazards

Health and wellbeing if you have to wait

If, for any reason, your child's condition gets worse please call 111, seek an appointment with your GP or seek urgent medical attention

Contact us

If you want to discuss any of the above with a member of the pre-operative care team either send an email to bwc.spinalpathway@nhs.net, or call 0121 333 9999.

