

# While you wait for an operation

## What we're doing

One of the often overlooked impacts of the pandemic has been the impact it has had on children waiting for planned (elective) surgery.



Everyone at Birmingham Children's Hospital are doing all we can to see patients as soon as is practically possible. To do this we are putting on additional clinics, tests like x-rays or scans and surgery sessions. But despite these efforts we know for some they may still have to wait longer than we would like.

## What you can do

One of the most important things to do while waiting for surgery is to keep fit and well and if possible improve health and fitness as that can help reduce risk and improve recovery times. There's information below on how you can do that.

However, the most important thing is to monitor your child's health and to get in touch with either your GP or your Children's Hospital Clinic, if you feel their condition has deteriorated or if you have any concerns.

If you are concerned or feel you need urgent help please contact NHS 111 which can find the help you need.

Please be reassured that although it is taking longer than planned for us to see you, we are still by your side.

## Moving more

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:

<http://www.movingmedicine.ac.uk/consultation->

**“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**



[guides/patient-info-finder Change4Life: www.nhs.uk/change4lifeEat well](https://www.nhs.uk/change4lifeEatwell)

### 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](https://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 (<http://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 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](https://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](https://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](https://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.

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them>

### Mental wellbeing

As important as physical wellbeing is it is important that to look after ours and our family's mental health. We know it can be hard waiting for care among all the demands of modern life. Remember, it's ok to not be ok, and if you or anyone in your family needs help there are a number of local and national services available. You can find out more by clicking the links below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/>

<https://www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/mental-health-support-offer>

