

Paediatric Surgery and Urology

Introduction

Your child has been listed for surgery by one of the surgeons at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Your surgeon will explain to you in detail why surgery has been recommended for your child. He or she will also discuss any alternative treatments and what the risks of the surgery are, so that you can decide about the care for your child.

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 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 put yourself in the best possible place to have your surgery.



Guidance for Patients

When we can offer a date for surgery, one of our team will get in touch with you. After a date for surgery is agreed, you will receive the instructions about where and when you should bring your child to the hospital for the surgery. You will also get "fasting instructions" for your child. There is more information about fasting instructions later in this leaflet.



You will need to complete an “anaesthetic preassessment”. This is to look for any problems that may affect the anaesthetic for your child. Often this is done with a phone call, but some patients will be asked to come to the hospital to see an Anaesthetist before their surgery. An anaesthetist is a specialist who will put your child to sleep, look after them during the operation, wake them up again and manage pain relief afterwards.

Depending on the type of surgery, you may need to be admitted to hospital before the planned operation or you may be admitted on the day of the operation. Some patients can go home on the same day as the operation. Other patients need to stay in hospital over night or for several days after the surgery. Your surgeon will discuss this with you.

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.

Before your operation, one of the surgeons will see you. They will discuss the operation with you. They may need to put a mark on your child to identify where the surgery is needed. They will be able to answer any questions you have. You will also be asked to sign a consent form.

Your anaesthetist will also come and see you and your child before the surgery. They will talk to you about the anaesthetic and pain relief after the operation. You can also ask them any questions you have.

To make the surgery as safe as possible, your child will not be able to have anything to eat for 6 hours before their surgery. They will be able to drink up until 1 hour before the operation. Having food in their stomach means that there is a risk of your child vomiting when they are going off to sleep. If this happens, they can become very unwell. There are different starving rules for babies who are breast fed.

We will tell you when your child needs to stop eating and drinking

If your child has something to eat when they are meant to be fasting before their surgery, their operation may be cancelled. This is for their safety. It is important that you follow any ‘fasting instructions’ - rules for when they need to stop eating.

There may be a wait on the ward before your child goes to theatre. We try and get through all cases on a theatre list as quickly and safely as we can, to minimise the time you wait before going for your surgery. Sometimes an operation can take longer than we expect or there can be other issues in theatres. This can lead to other patients having a longer wait to get to theatre.

After your child's surgery, one of the surgical team will come and talk with you. They will explain what was found and what care your child needs after the surgery. The surgical team often does



not come around until they have finished the operating list – so if your child has surgery in the morning it will be lunchtime before they will see you. If the surgery was in the afternoon, it will often be teatime or early evening before they can see you.

If your child has concerns or is likely to 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.

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.

While you are waiting for a date for the surgery, 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.

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.

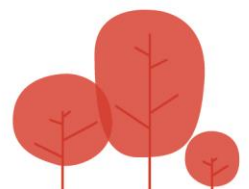
Getting control of asthma – Asthma is common in childhood and if poorly controlled can cause problems during the anaesthetic. An assessment of the level of control can be made using the Asthma Control Test (www.asthmacontroltest.com). If support or improvements are required please seek advice from your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

Creating a smoke-free home – Children 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. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-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 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 the 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. <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>



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.

We have a learning disability team that will be able to support your child prior to their admission, if you would benefit from this please get in touch with our team. bwc.learningdisabilityliaison@nhs.net or 0121 333 6283



What to bring in on Admission

- Patients may bring in nightwear and a change of clothes.
- Comfortable, loose clothing for discharge.
- A changing bag, to include anything you baby or child will need (nappies, bottles, beakers, toys etc.)
- Toiletries, including any sanitary products your child may need
- 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.
- You may bring along laptops/games, phones and headphones etc. although 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

Telephone: 0121 333 8947

Useful links

- Link to BWC webpage <https://bwc.nhs.uk/your-operation>
- Preadmission leaflet <https://bwc.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjjm4n1739.pdf&ver=2022>
- Link to Royal college of anaesthetists <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patient-information/patient-information-resources/information-children-parents-carers>
- Parent leaflet about GA: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patient-information/patient-information-resources/information-children-parents-carers>



- School age leaflet about GA: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03/DavyDetective2014web.pdf>
- Teenager leaflet about GA: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03/TeenGuide2021web.pdf>
- Pre-school leaflet about GA: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03/07-ChildsAnaesthetic2020web.pdf>
- Teenager webpage: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03/YAYA-YoungPersonsGuide2018web.pdf>

