



tips for parents

Ask Questions.

Talk to your doctor and hospital staff so you know what to expect.

Be Honest.

Tell your child the truth about what will happen and how things will feel.

Listen.

Make sure to answer your child's questions and talk about any concerns.

Pack Items from Home.

Bring pictures of your family, books, toys, a stuffed animal, a blanket, a pillow, schoolwork or their favorite pajamas to make the hospital feel more like home.

Prepare your Other Children.

Remember to be open and honest with your other children and include them in surgery preparations when possible.

Speak to a Children's Health Child Life Specialist.

They are available to help your child with additional preparation and support. Contact information is listed on the back of this brochure.



Want additional help relieving your child's fears and concerns about their surgery?

Contact your Certified Child Life Specialist.

Dallas: 214-456-8308 or SurgeryChildLife@childrens.com

Plano: 469-303-6280 or ChildLifeLegacy@childrens.com



Scan the QR code or visit childrens.com/surgeryday for additional resources.

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incredible care to prepare your child for surgery.



A stay in the hospital can be stressful for children, even if it is short. Routines are different. People are different. There are machines everywhere. How can you help your child? How can you make it less stressful? It might seem easier not to talk about it at all, but the truth is that honesty is good for your child. This brochure from Children's HealthSM and help from your child life specialist will allow you to talk to your child openly about their surgery. Simply find your child's age range for more information and tips on preparing for surgery.

babies (0-12 Months)



During their time in the hospital, your baby may go through changes in routine and be away from parents or caregivers for a short time. This can be stressful for babies. You can help make it less stressful by letting the nursing staff know your baby's sleep schedule and the times they usually eat. Below are some other ways to help your baby during their hospital stay.

Quality Time

Try to be with your baby as much as you can. Don't be afraid to take part in caring for your baby in the hospital.

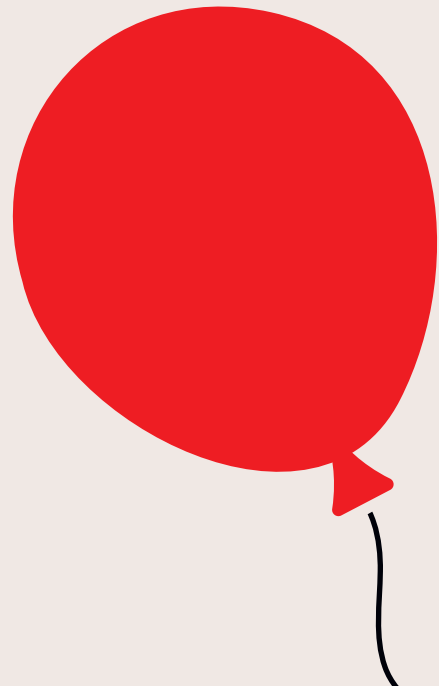
Mood

Your mood can impact your baby's mood. For example, the calmer and more relaxed you are, the calmer and more relaxed your baby will be.

Support

Babies can become more fussy and harder to console during this time. Here are some tips to help them:

- Bring familiar items from home (a pacifier, blanket or toy)
- Speak softly to your baby
- Hold and touch your baby often



toddlers & preschoolers (1-4 Years)



Children at this age might have false ideas about being in the hospital. Your child may feel guilty because they think they have done something wrong. Reassure your child that surgery is not punishment; instead, it is to help their body. Below are ways to help your toddler and preschooler during their hospital stay.

Simple Terms

Using simple terms to talk with your child about their surgery a couple of days before and the day of surgery will help them understand best. The more times your child hears this, the better.

For example, you can use simple explanations like the following:

- The doctor is going to help your ears.
- The doctor is going to take pictures of the inside of your body.

Books and Videos

Reading and watching videos can be great tools for preparing your child. Scan the QR code on the back of this brochure to find a list of books and videos you can read and watch with your child.

Medical Play

Encourage your child to play with medical toys to help them feel comfortable and give them a sense of control. They could pretend to be a doctor doing surgery on a stuffed animal or a nurse giving medicine to a baby doll. You can buy medical toys at most toy stores.

school-age children (5-12 Years)



Hospital stays can be very stressful for school-age children. Because they better understand what surgery means, they may worry about missing school, having pain, or what their body will look like. Below are some things to consider when preparing your child for surgery.

Time for Thought

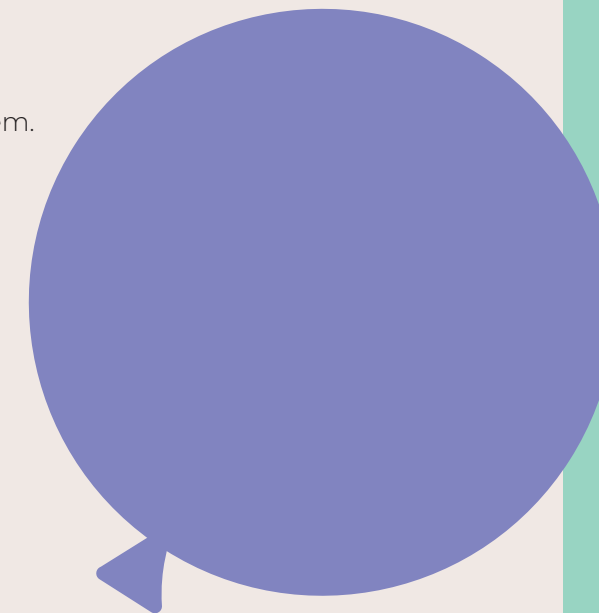
It is good for older children to have more time to prepare mentally. Children need time to process the idea of surgery and think of questions they may want to ask. Tell your child about their upcoming surgery a few days or a week before, to make sure they understand correctly.

Body Image

One of the biggest fears at this age is change or harm to their body. It is important to be open and honest with children. Tell them how their body may look or feel different when they wake up, depending on their surgery. You may show them photos and encourage them to play with medical toys.

Peer Approval

School-age children may be worried about what their friends think of them. For example, they may fear others will see them as babies if they are afraid or cry. It's important to talk to your child about their feelings and tell them these feelings are normal.



teenagers (13-18 Years)



Although your teenager may act bravely, surgery affects older kids just like younger ones. Teenagers need support from their parents or caregivers. They also need space and privacy to deal with their surgery. Below are some ways for you to better understand your teenager's feelings.

Independence and Control

During the teenage years, there is an increased need for independence and control. Teenagers may feel they have lost control over themselves and their world while in the hospital. It is important to let them make decisions whenever appropriate. Encourage your teenager to make a list of questions for the hospital staff and take an active role in their medical care.

Privacy

Privacy is also important for teenagers. They usually are private about their bodies, thoughts, and feelings. They might prefer to talk about their feelings to a friend instead of a parent. It is important to respect their privacy.

Peer Support

When possible, allow teenagers to spend time with their friends. Friendships are an important way teenagers feel connected and supported, especially during a hospital stay. If their friends cannot come to the hospital, consider other ideas such as video or phone calls.