

## THE DAY OF SURGERY:

- ▶ Do not allow your child to eat or drink anything, unless otherwise instructed by your physician. Please see details in the “Anesthesia” section (above).
- ▶ Have your child wear loose fitting clothing and low heeled comfortable shoes.
- ▶ Have your child remove all jewelry, including rings and body piercings. Swelling may occur in their hands during surgery. The rings may become too tight, which could affect the circulation in their fingers. Notify the nurse in advance if you have any questions or concerns.
- ▶ Your adolescent should leave their contact lenses at home and bring eyeglasses.
- ▶ Bring your child’s crutches or any other assistive device with you.
- ▶ Bring your child’s blue hospital card and insurance card.
- ▶ Bring your child’s medication list to the hospital with you.
- ▶ You will be asked to sign an informed consent. Read it carefully. Make sure everything on the form is correct. Make sure all of your questions have been answered. If you do not understand something on the form, ask someone to explain.
- ▶ The staff may ask you or your child the same questions many times. They will ask: their name, what kind of surgery they are having, and the part of their body to be operated on. This is for their safety.
- ▶ A health care worker will mark the spot on your child’s body to be operated on. Make sure they mark only the correct part and nowhere else. This helps avoid mistakes.
- ▶ Marking usually happens when your child is awake. If he/she cannot be awake for the marking, a parent/guardian will assist in the marking process.
- ▶ The surgeon will take a “time out” just before surgery. This is done to make sure they are doing the right surgery on the right body part on the right person.
- ▶ Occasionally, emergency cases arise which cause unplanned delays. We apologize in advance for any wait you may experience and ask for your patience.

## AFTER SURGERY:

- ▶ Your child will be taken to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). This is an open room with many patients awakening from anesthesia. Discuss any questions or concerns with your nurse. One parent will be allowed to be with the child when PACU staff deem appropriate.
- ▶ Your child will be observed closely until they recover from anesthesia. Their heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen level will be monitored. They may have an oxygen mask.
- ▶ The staff in the PACU will ask your child a lot of questions to find out how alert they are and if they are having pain or nausea.
- ▶ The staff will frequently assess your child’s comfort level and administer appropriate medication. Depending on age, your child may be asked to score their discomfort on a level of 0 to 10 or point to a face figure.
- ▶ Ask questions about new medicines that are given to your child. What is it? What is it for? If you have more questions about a medication, talk to your child’s doctor or nurse before your child takes it.
- ▶ You will need instructions about what to do when your child leaves the hospital. This may include medications, therapy, how to care for the surgery site, and activities to avoid. Be sure to follow these instructions carefully, including when and who to call if you think you are having a problem. This helps reduce the risk of infection and, if you get an infection, allows for it to be taken care of early.



Floating Hospital for Children is easily accessible by car from the Massachusetts Turnpike (Route 90), the Central Artery and the Southeast Expressway (Route 93). Floating Hospital for Children is located in downtown Boston, in Chinatown and the Theater District and within walking distance of the Boston Common, Downtown Crossing and many hotels and restaurants. For directions, visit [www.floatinghospital.org/AboutUs/Directions](http://www.floatinghospital.org/AboutUs/Directions).

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# Preparing for Your Child’s Surgery

## Instructions



Floating Hospital  
for Children  
at Tufts Medical Center

## DAYS OR WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY:

- ▶ Talk with your child's surgeon about why surgery is needed, how it might help and whether there are other options.
- ▶ Bring an up-to-date list of all your child's medications and dosages, including over-the-counter medicines, supplements, and herbals taken. Talk to the surgeon about why your child takes each medication and how it helps. Ask if there are any medicines (even over-the-counter) that he/she should not take before the surgery. Let the surgeon know if your child has an allergy to any medication and what happens when he/she takes it.
- ▶ Discuss with the surgeon if your child is being treated for chronic pain.
- ▶ Tell the surgeon if your child has diabetes or high blood sugar.
- ▶ Talk to the surgeon about your child's anticipated discharge plan.
- ▶ Avoid second hand smoke as it is harmful to children.
- ▶ Avoid people who are sick. Tell your relatives and friends not to visit before and after the surgery if they are sick.
- ▶ If your child has symptoms of a cold or flu within a few days before surgery, call the Surgery Center (or your surgeon's office) to determine if your child should still have surgery.

## ANESTHESIA:

- ▶ You will have a chance to meet with the anesthesiologist before surgery to discuss what will work best for your child and consent to the anesthetic plan. Your child may need an Anesthesia Clinic appointment before her surgery. Call the preoperative clinic Monday through Friday between 8:00am and 3:00pm at 617-636-7538 or 617-636-4526. If you have questions about the possible anesthesia your child will receive or if your child has a personal or family history of problems with anesthesia.
- ▶ Before surgery, eating and drinking are not allowed for certain period of time. **For your child's safety, it's very important that you follow these feeding instructions exactly.** If your child eats or drinks after the indicated time, the surgery may be cancelled. Instructions are as follows:
  - 8 hours before surgery: stop solid foods, including gum and candy.
  - 6 hours before surgery: stop formula or milk.
  - 4 hours before surgery: stop feeding with breast milk.
  - Your child may have clear liquids until 2 hours before surgery. Clear liquids are fluids you can see through such as water, apple juice, and pedialyte.
  - Orange juice, cow's milk, soy milk, broth and formula are NOT clear liquids.
- ▶ Before starting the surgery, an anesthesiologist will give your child a form of anesthetic to allow him/her to sleep and keep him pain free and asleep during the procedure. The anesthesiologist will determine the type and dosage of anesthesia for your child, based on his age, medical condition and history. Most children fall asleep with medicine given through a mask or IV (through a vein). Once the surgery is over, the anesthesiologist will adjust the anesthetic so your child will awaken and remain comfortable in the recovery room.

- ▶ Our staff of anesthesiologists, surgeons and nurses will do their best to make your child's hospital stay as pleasant as possible. However, parents also have a major role to play. At the Floating Hospital for Children, we allow a parent to be present at the start of anesthesia when the anesthesiologist considers it to be beneficial for the child (also called a Parent Present Induction or PPI). The decision to offer a PPI is individualized, and is made by evaluating factors like the child's age, developmental stage, emotional status, degree of anxiety, and willingness to cooperate. The PPI usually will apply to patients above 10 months of age.
- ▶ Many children receive a special medicine before sleep induction to help calm them. This "premed" or "goofy juice" is not always used, and with PPI may not be necessary because you will stay with your child until they are asleep. Most children who have a PPI will breathe medicine through a special mask; however, it is sometimes necessary to use other forms of induction requiring muscular "shots" or an IV.
- ▶ If you are able to come with your child for the induction, there are different ways how your child may appear during the anesthesia induction process.
  - Some children will refuse the mask while others like it. It is not painful. It is a new experience for them
  - Some children may appear agitated with the mask on their face.
  - Some children's eyes roll back just prior to going to sleep
  - Some children wiggle oddly before going to sleep
  - Some children cope very well and accept the mask.
- ▶ The anesthesiologist will let you know when it is time for you to leave the induction or operating room. Your child may not appear to be asleep when you leave the room because his or her eyes may still be partially open. It is important for you to realize that your child is unaware of your presence or you're leaving at this point. Keep in mind the following:

- You will be asked to leave the room once your child is asleep. Someone will direct you back to the waiting room.
- Once the anesthesia process begins to take place, the procedures must continue for the benefits of your child. Therefore, if your child becomes upset or resists the mask, he/she may have to be gently restrained.
- Finally, we would like to remind you that we would never require you to choose PPI. For many parents, witnessing their child unconscious can be very emotional. If you do not feel comfortable or prepared to go back to the induction with your child we will not ask you to do so. This is an individual choice and our caring staff is dedicated to providing your child with the highest quality of care whether or not you are present for your child's induction.
- ▶ Our perioperative child life specialist is available to provide distraction activities and preparation for your child operating room experience. She can be contacted at 617-636-9983 to answer any questions about how to prepare your child.

## THE DAY OR NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY:

- ▶ Do not allow your adolescent to shave near where they will have surgery. Shaving can irritate skin, which may lead to infection. If your adolescent is a boy who shaves his face every day, ask the surgeon if it is okay to do so.
- ▶ Keep your child warm. This means wearing warm clothes or wrapping up in blankets when you go to the hospital. In cold weather, it also means heating up the car before you get in. Keeping warm before surgery lowers your chances of getting an infection.
- ▶ Your child should shower and wash their hair. Follow any instructions provided on use of an anti-microbial soap. Do not use hair spray or other hair styling products. Remove any nail polish on child's fingers and toes and do not allow wearing of makeup. The caregivers need to see your child's skin and nails to check their blood circulation.