



# Children's Surgery Guide



**SANFORD**  
Children's

# Your Child's Surgery

Thank you for choosing Sanford Health for your child's surgical care. This guide will help your child to have a successful surgery experience.

## Enhanced Recovery After Surgery

**ERAS** means **E**nhanced **R**ecovery **A**fter **S**urgery. Following these guidelines will lead to a faster recovery and getting your child back to their normal activities sooner. You will receive a surgery guide and more instruction based on your child's specific needs.

Following these guidelines for recovery will help with:

- Breathing
- Blood flow
- Return of bowel function
- Pain
- Overall wellbeing

Items marked in red are part of ERAS.

## Phone Call or Clinic Visit

A member of the healthcare team will give you the information for the questions below. We encourage you to ask questions and let us know about your child's special needs.



# Questions About My Child's Surgery

What day is my child's surgery? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is my child's surgeon? \_\_\_\_\_

What surgery is my child having? \_\_\_\_\_

What number should I call if I have questions? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is my child having surgery? \_\_\_\_\_

What time should my child and I arrive? \_\_\_\_\_

Where should I park? \_\_\_\_\_

What door should I use? \_\_\_\_\_

## Before My Child's Surgery

- Talk to younger children a day or two before surgery.
- Allow older children up to a week to ask questions and review information.
- Be honest. If you do not know the answer, tell your child that you will find out.
- Use simple words your child will understand.
- Encourage your child to talk about their feelings and ask questions.
- Have your child pack things they want at the hospital such as a security blanket, a favorite stuffed animal, or a toy.
- If needed, make childcare arrangements for siblings.
- Write down questions as you think of them and bring with you to the hospital.
- Encourage your child to be active at least 30 minutes each day for 5 days before surgery.
- Keep your child away from secondhand smoke.

## The Night Before and Day of Surgery

- Give your child their medication as usual with only a sip of water, unless told not to.
- Bring a list of your child's medications and the last time each was taken. You may be asked to bring your child's medications in their original bottles.
- Have your child bathe or shower the night before or morning of surgery. Do not let your child use lotion after.

When does my child stop eating and drinking?

- Eating: stop date: \_\_\_\_\_ stop time: \_\_\_\_\_
- Drinking: stop date: \_\_\_\_\_ stop time: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your child may need to take a special drink before surgery at this time: \_\_\_\_\_

Remove the following:

- Jewelry
- Body piercings
- Nail polish
- Makeup
- Contacts

Your child's surgery may need to be rescheduled for another day if:

- You do not arrive on time
- Your child eats or drinks after the time given

# Eating and Drinking Instructions

## Infants Under 1 Year of Age:

- **Breastfed:** Your child may nurse up to 4 hours before arrival time. They may have clear liquids (such as Pedialyte) up to 2 hours before arrival time.
- **Formula fed:** Your child may have formula or milk up to 6 hours before arrival time. They may have clear liquids (such as Pedialyte) up to 2 hours before arrival time.
- **After 12:00 midnight:** No solid food or baby food.

## Children

- Up to 6 hours before arrival or 8 hours before surgery time as instructed: A light meal, such as dry toast and clear liquids or milk. Avoid fatty foods.
- Up to 2 hours before as instructed: Clear liquids only such as water, apple juice or infant electrolyte solutions (such as Pedialyte).
- 2 hours before as instructed: Nothing to eat or drink.

## Children With Tube Feedings:

Your child may be fed formula or milk through the feeding tube for up to six hours before arrival and have clear liquids (preference is Pedialyte) through the feeding tube up to two hours before surgery.



## Admitting

- After registration, you and your child will be greeted by surgical staff.
- Your child will:
  - Receive a hospital bracelet with their name, birth date, and hospital number
  - Be asked to change into a hospital gown or pajamas
  - Be weighed
  - Have their vital signs (heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure) done.
- You will be asked about your child's allergies, medications, and recent exposure to illness.
- The anesthesia provider, surgeon, and other members of the care team may talk with you.
- You will be told where to wait while your child is in surgery. If you need to leave, please tell a staff member that you are leaving and when you will return.
- A caregiver or guardian **must** be available at all times for minor children while the child is in surgery.

## Surgery

- Your child will be brought to the operating room.
- Your child will be connected to equipment that will monitor them during the surgery.
- The length of the surgery depends on the type of surgery and your child's needs.
- Nothing calms a child more than a confident parent. Reassure your child that our staff will take good care of them while they are in our care.

## After Surgery

- After your child's surgery, the surgeon will speak with you.
- During this time, the anesthesia team will wake your child and bring them back to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).
- Your child may be very sleepy and may not remember leaving the surgery room.
- When your child is ready, one parent may be allowed in the PACU.
- Your child:
  - May have a pale, puffy, or swollen face
  - Will have an IV
  - Be connected to monitors that will measure heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure
  - May be fussy, confused, groggy, or just feel out of sorts
  - Will need help with activity
- Each child wakes up from anesthesia in their own way. Most children do not remember what happened. As they wake up from anesthesia, some children may:
  - Look like they are awake but may not be aware of what is happening
  - Cry, be restless, and reach for their parent
- It is important for you to stay calm and comfort your child. A member of the healthcare team will make sure your child is safe during this time.
- If your child is sleeping, do not wake them. Children do best if they can wake up naturally after anesthesia.
- Speak softly and calmly, reassure your child.
- When your child is ready, they will be moved to the discharge area or brought to a hospital room.

## Going Home

When your child is ready to go home, you will receive instructions on how to care for your child. This will include:

- Activity
- Medications
- Special care
- What to expect
- Follow-up appointments
- Who to call with questions

## Effects of Anesthesia

Your child may be awake and alert when they are ready to leave, but the effects of the medication may last for 12 to 24 hours. Your child should be watched closely as they may have:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Irritability
- Drowsiness
- Impaired balance and reflexes

## Activity

- Your child should not return to daycare or school the day of surgery.
- Protect your child from falls, sharp objects, and other dangers.
- Teens should not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after surgery.

Being active is important to your child's recovery. Follow any instructions you are given about your child's activity.



## Managing Pain at Home

- Give your child pain medication only as directed.
- Pain pills or liquids take at least 20 to 30 minutes to work.
- Pain medications should be taken with food to prevent an upset stomach.
- If the pain is not relieved or gets worse, call your child's doctor.
- Pain medications can cause constipation. If allowed on your child's diet, encourage fluids, fruits, and vegetables.
- Positioning, music, dim lights, warm blankets, and favorite toys may help your child relax and feel more comfortable.

## Behavior

Some children may have behavior changes after surgery. These changes are normal and should not last long. Encourage rest and quiet activities. If these changes last longer than you expect, call your child's surgeon. These changes may include:

- Sleep patterns
- Eating
- Clingy behavior
- Being more active
- Acting younger (for example, bed-wetting or thumb sucking)
- New fears (for example, not wanting to sleep alone or needing a night light)

Sanford Children's Hospital Team is here to help you!  
If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact us.







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