

# Having Surgery at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



Children's Hospital  
of Philadelphia

Child Life, Education & Creative Arts Therapy



# How to Help Prepare Your Child for Surgery

Surgery can feel stressful and overwhelming for children and caregivers. Children and teens cope better with surgery and recovery when they know what to expect before, during, and after the day of surgery. You can help your child by preparing them with information found in this book. This book was created to give caregivers the language and tools to explain what will happen.

- **Prepare yourself.** If you are prepared, you will be better informed and able to support your child.
- **Be honest!** Use simple words to explain why he or she needs surgery in a way that makes sense for their age.
- Encourage **discussion** and **questions**. If you don't know an answer, that's okay. You can always ask the surgery team.
- Include your child in **packing a bag** for the hospital with a comfort item or activities. If your child will stay overnight, packing pajamas and toiletries helps younger children understand the concept of sleeping overnight and gives older children a sense of control in the situation.
- Reassure them that it is **normal to feel nervous** before surgery.
- Offer lots of **hugs** and **praise**.



Hi I'm Megan! I am having surgery at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.  
Sometimes children need surgery to check or fix a part of their body.  
There are many different reasons why kids need surgery.  
What part of your body needs surgery?



When my family and I arrive at the hospital, we let the person at the front desk know my name and that I am here for my surgery.



When it's my turn, a nurse calls my name. My family and I follow her and she checks my height and how much I weigh.



Next, we go to the room where I get ready for surgery. My parents help me change into hospital pajamas. There is a bed on wheels with railings on the sides to keep kids safe. Sometimes, this bed is called a stretcher.



The nurse checks my temperature on my forehead and listens to my heart and lungs with a stethoscope.



She also checks my blood pressure with a blood pressure cuff. The blood pressure cuff goes around my arm and feels like a tight hug for a little bit.





A pulse oximeter wraps around my finger and looks like a Band-Aid with a red light on it. It helps the nurse check the amount of oxygen in my body.



We meet the doctors who will take care of me during my surgery. I meet a surgeon whose job is to help a part of my body and an anesthesiologist whose job is to give my body sleepy medicine (anesthesia) during my surgery. They also answer all of our questions.



Before surgery, my nurse gives me some medicine to drink out of a syringe. A syringe is like the medicine squirter I use at home. This medicine helps me feel more relaxed and calm.



When the doctors are ready, I tell my parents “see you soon!” I will see them when my surgery is finished.

A nurse pushes my bed into the operating room where I have my surgery. I bring my favorite stuffed animal with me too.



This is the waiting room where my parents wait. They stay here while I have surgery and a nurse checks in to tell them how I am doing.



In the operating room, I see some lights on the ceiling and monitors that look like computer screens. The lights keep the room bright and the monitors help the doctors and nurses take care of me.



The doctors and nurses are waiting for me in the operating room. It is an extra clean room so they are wearing special outfits with hats to cover their hair and masks to cover their mouths.



They help me move to a different bed without wheels. Since this bed is smaller than my bed at home, they place a seatbelt around my belly to keep me safe, just like in the car. The room feels cold but I have blankets to keep me warm.

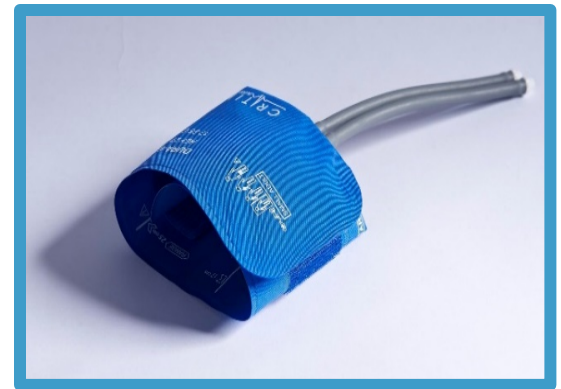
## Leads



## Pulse Oximeter



## Blood Pressure Cuff



Then, the nurse puts the blood pressure cuff back on my arm and the pulse oximeter on my finger. She also puts three stickers on my chest to count my heartbeat. This is how the nurses and doctors make sure I am asleep and keep me safe during my surgery.





Next, the anesthesiologist helps me breathe the anesthesia air through a mask. The mask feels soft over my nose and mouth. I can breathe just like I normally do. The air in this mask helps me to fall asleep so I do not see, hear or feel any part of my surgery. After I fall asleep, my surgery begins and the anesthesiologist stays with me until the surgery is finished.



When my surgery is over, the doctors stop giving me the sleepy medicine and I wake up. My nurses and doctors bring me to the wake up room. My family is waiting for me in this room and there is a nurse to take care of me.



When I wake up, I have an IV in my hand. An IV is a small, bendy tube placed inside a vein to give my body medicine. My doctors gave me the sleepy medicine through this IV during my surgery to keep me asleep. After I have a drink, my nurse takes the IV out and then I am ready to go home.



When it is time for me to go home, I get a ride in a wheelchair because I still feel sleepy. Everyone is really nice and helpful but I am glad to go home!



Sometimes kids need to sleep overnight at the hospital after surgery. Each inpatient room in the hospital looks a little different. Sometimes you will have your own room, and other times you will share a room with a roommate.



Even though each inpatient room in the hospital looks a little different, some things will remain the same. There will be a bed for you, a bathroom, a television, and a couch or sleep chair for a caregiver to sleep overnight too.



There is also a playroom full of toys and activities. If you are unable to visit the playroom, staff can also bring these items to your room.

# Discussion

- What do you think is the hardest part of having surgery?
- What would make this part easier? What things could you do to make it easier?
- What do you think will be the best part about having surgery?
- Who will come with you on the day of your surgery?
- What questions do you have?