



Preparing Your Child for Surgery (Babies)

Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's health care team about specific care for your child.

Your baby will not be able to grasp things that will happen to him during surgery. But there are a few things you can do to help keep him as calm and relaxed as possible.

What are some common stressors for babies?

Even though your baby cannot talk to you, he may show signs of being stressed at certain times. The list below has some common stressors for babies:

- Being away from you and other caregivers
- Strange sights, sounds, and smells
- Interrupted sleep
- Hunger
- Having many different caregivers
- New and different routines
- Day and night confusion

How can I help prepare my baby for surgery?

You can help prepare your baby for surgery by keeping his routine as normal as possible. This list of tips can give you some ideas.

- Keep your baby's routine the same as usual the day before surgery.
- Use a relaxed voice and body language.

The day of surgery

- Bring your baby's pacifier, a favorite toy or blanket to the hospital. This helps create a more familiar place for your baby.
- Bring along some soothing music for your baby to listen to.
- It is normal for your baby to cry and be hard to comfort during this time. Be patient with your baby and give him lots of love.
- Distract, rock, walk, and comfort your baby before surgery. The brief period right before surgery when he cannot eat or drink can be hard for both of you.

Take care of yourself too

- Make sure that you know about your baby's surgery and know what to expect. This can help reduce your fears about it.
- Make sure that you, your baby, and your family are well rested.
- Take care of yourself. Your baby can pick up on and react to your stress level.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.