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## Our goal at Children's is to provide the safest possible care for our patients.

We want to keep your child safe during surgery. We invite you to partner with us and be involved in your child's care. The most important thing you can do to help keep your child safe during surgery is to be an active member of your child's care team. To help us keep your child safe, **please speak up** when you have questions or concerns and follow these safety tips.

### How can I make sure I understand my child's surgery?

Make sure you know what is happening with your child's care.

- If you do not understand something, **please speak up** and ask questions.
- Write down any questions or concerns you have.
- A member of your child's care team will let you know when your child should stop eating and drinking before surgery. Be sure to follow these instructions exactly.

### How can I help prevent infections?

- Make sure your child's vaccines (shots) are up to date before surgery.
- Give your child a bath or shower at least 24 hours before coming for surgery. This helps to make sure the skin, body and hair are as clean as possible. Do not use lotions, oils or powder.
- If you were taught to use special wipes the night before surgery, be sure to follow all instructions exactly.
- Let your child's nurse or doctor know if your child has any skin problems, such as rashes or irritation.
- Our staff should clean their hands before caring for your child. If they do not, **please speak up** and ask them to do so.

### Why does my child need an ID band?

Your child's ID band helps keep them safe. It helps the care team know they are giving a medicine or treatment to the right child.

- Care team members will ask for your child's name and date of birth when they check the ID band.
- If a member of your child's care team does not check the ID band before giving a medicine or treatment, **please speak up** and ask them to.
- Let the care team know **right away** if the ID band comes off.

### What does the care team do for medicine safety?

Based on what you tell us, we will make a list of all medicines your child takes.

- We need to know the names of all medicines, along with the dose and concentration for each one.

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

## Safety with surgery, continued

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- Be sure to tell the nurse and doctor about any over the counter medicines, herbs, vitamins or supplements your child takes.
- Bring all medicines with you on the day of surgery.
- Tell us about any allergies, so we can make a list for your child's records.
- Make sure these lists are correct. It is **very important** to your child's safety.

Before surgery, your child may get pain medicine by mouth (to swallow) or medicine to help them feel relaxed and sleepy. These medicines can affect their balance and ability to move and walk well. After your child gets these medicines:

- Do not allow them to get up and walk alone.
- If your child is on a bed or stretcher, stay beside them or keep the side rails up and locked.
- If you hold your child, make sure they are secure in your arms.
- **Please speak up** if you have questions or concerns about what your child can do.

### **What does the care team do to prevent medical errors during surgery?**

- If your child is having surgery on one side of the body, the doctor will mark your child's surgery site with their initials. Examples include surgery on one eye, one leg or one kidney. You will be asked to confirm the surgery site when it is marked.
- You may read about your child's doctor taking a "time out" just before surgery. This is done to make sure the right surgery is done on the right child.

### **Who should I speak to if I have concerns about my child's care?**

- If you have concerns about the quality or safety of your child's care, please speak with your child's nurse or doctor. If needed, you may also speak with the manager for that area, the nursing supervisor or the patient representative.
- You may contact The Joint Commission by e-mail at [complaint@jcaho.org](mailto:complaint@jcaho.org) or by phone on Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Central Standard Time) at 1-800-994-6610.
- You may also contact the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Office of Regulatory Services at 404-657-5700.

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# Safety with surgery, continued

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## Once you go home:

### What about safety with medicines at home?

- When you get ready to go home, a member of your child's care team will give you an updated list of your child's medicines. It will include anything new your child's doctor orders.
- **Please speak up** if you have questions or concerns about your child's medicines.

### How can I help to prevent infections after surgery?

The most important thing you can do to help prevent infections is to clean your hands well and often.

- If your hands look dirty, wash them well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Rub your hands together really well. Be sure to include your palms, nails, in between your fingers, and the back of your hands.
- If your hands do not look dirty, you may clean them with an alcohol-based hand gel or foam. Rub it all over your hands, especially under your nails and between your fingers, until your hands are dry.
- Also follow these tips to help prevent infections:
  - If an antibiotic is prescribed to use after surgery, give it as advised by your child's doctor.
  - If your child has an incision, keep the area around it clean and dry. Do not touch the area, and teach your child not to touch it.
  - If your child has a dressing, change it as advised by your child's nurse or doctor.
  - Stay away from sick people who could pass germs to your child.
  - Continue to clean your hands well.

### What are some signs of infection?

Some signs of infection include:

- Redness or swelling around the incision.
- Bad smell or discolored drainage coming from your child's incision.
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher or as advised by your child's doctor.
- Feeling weak or sluggish or changes in your child's activity.
- Increased pain not relieved by pain medicine.

If you ever think your child's incision is infected, call your child's doctor **right away**. Also call your child's doctor if you have questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

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

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