

# Preparing your baby for surgery

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Your baby will not be able to understand what will happen with surgery, but there are some things you can do to help keep them as calm and relaxed as possible.

## What are some common stressors for babies?

Even though your baby cannot talk, they may show signs of stress at certain times. Some common stressors for babies include:

- 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?

### Take care of your baby

- Keep your baby's normal routine the day before surgery.
- Bring favorite pacifier, toy or blanket to the hospital. This helps create a more familiar place for your baby.
- Bring soothing music for your baby to listen to.
- Distract, rock, walk and comfort your baby before surgery. The short time right before surgery when they cannot eat or drink can be hard for both of you.
- Use a relaxed voice and body language.
- It is normal for your baby to cry and be hard to comfort during this time. Be patient with your baby, and give them lots of love.

### Take care of yourself

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

**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.**