



Safety with surgery

Patient and Family Education

Our goal at Children's is to provide the safest possible care for all of 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 that you can do to help keep your child safe during surgery is to be an active member of your child's healthcare team. To help us keep your child safe, **Please Speak Up!** when you have questions or concerns and follow these safety tips.

Know about your child's procedure or surgery

Make sure that 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 that you have about your child.

How can I help prevent infections before coming for surgery?

- Give your child a bath or shower before coming for surgery. This helps to make sure that the skin, body and hair are as clean as possible.

Why does my child need an ID band?

- Your child's ID band helps keep your child safe by letting our staff know that they are giving a medicine or treatment to the right child. Our staff will actively involve you when we ID your child. We will ask you to verify your child's name when we check your child's ID band.
- Let the staff know **right away** if it comes off
- If our staff do not check the ID band first, **Please Speak Up!** and ask them to do so.

What about safety with medicines in the surgery area?

- Based on what you tell us, we will make a list of all of the medicines that your child takes.
 - We need to know the names of all of the medicines that your child takes, along with the dose and the concentration of the medicine.
 - Be sure to tell the doctor and nurse about any over-the-counter medicines, herbs, vitamins or supplements that your child takes.
 - Please bring an updated list from your pharmacist or primary care doctor so that we have correct information.
 - We will also make a list of your child's allergies.
 - Making sure that all of these lists are correct is vital to your child's safety.
- Your child may receive medicines before surgery to help him relax and be sleepy. Or, your child may receive pain medicines after surgery. Once your child receives these types of medicines:
 - They can affect his balance and ability to move or walk well.
 - Do not allow him to get up and walk around.

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

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child. A Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice nurse is available 24 hours a day at 404-250-KIDS.

Safety with surgery, continued

- If your child is on a bed or stretcher, stay beside him or keep the side rails up and locked.
- If you hold your child, make sure that he is secure in your arms.
- If you have questions or concerns about what your child can do, **Please Speak Up!**

To help prevent medical errors during surgery:

- If your child is having surgery on one side of the body, his doctor will mark your child's surgery site. Examples include surgery on one eye, one leg or one kidney. You will be involved with marking the site.
- You may have read about your child's doctor taking a "time out" just before surgery. This is done to make sure that the right surgery is done on the right child.

Once you go home

What about safety with medicines at home?

- When you get ready to go home, we will give you an updated copy of the list of medicines that we made. It will include anything new that your child's doctor orders. The updated list will also be sent to your regular doctor.
- If you have questions about your child's medicines, **Please Speak Up!** and ask us.

How can I help to prevent infections after surgery?

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

- Clean your hands with soap and water or use the alcohol hand sanitizer.
- Our staff should clean their hands before caring for your child. If they do not, **Please Speak Up!** and ask them to do so.
- Other tips to help prevent infection once your child goes home include:
 - Make sure you give your child the antibiotics that your doctor prescribes. Antibiotics are medicines used to help prevent and treat infections.
 - 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 the doctor or nurse directs.
 - Stay away from sick people who might pass germs to your child.
 - Make sure your child's immunizations are up to date.

What are the signs of infection?

If you ever think that your child's incision is infected, **Please Speak Up!** and call your child's doctor **right away**. Signs of infection may include:

- Redness, swelling, bad odor or discolored drainage coming from your child's incision.
- A fever over 100.3°F or as your doctor directs.

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

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