Patient and Family Education

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.

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.
- We will let you know when your child should stop eating and drinking before surgery. Be sure to follow these instructions completely.

How can I help prevent infections before coming for surgery?
- Make sure your child’s immunizations 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 that 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 your child’s surgery, be sure to follow all instructions carefully.
- Let your child’s nurse or doctor know if your child has any skin problems, such as rashes or irritations.

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. We will ask you to verify your child’s name and date of birth 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.

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

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

• Before surgery, your child may receive a pain medicine by mouth or a medicine to help him relax and be sleepy. These medicines can affect his balance and ability to move or walk well. Once your child receives these types of medicines:
  - Do not allow him to get up and walk around alone.
  - 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 with his or her initials. Examples include surgery on one eye, one leg or one kidney. You will be asked to verify the surgery site when it is marked.

• 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.

Who should I speak to if I have concerns about my child’s care?

• If you have any 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 talk with the manager for that area, the nursing supervisor or the patient representative.

• You may contact Joint Commission by e-mail complaint@jcaho.org or by phone Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., CST at 800-994-6610.

• You may also contact the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Office of Regulatory Services at 404-657-5700.

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.

• 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. Rub your hands really well for at least 20 seconds. Rub your palms, fingernails, in between your fingers and the back of your hand.

• If your hands do not look dirty, you may clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Rub the sanitizer all over your hands, especially under your nails and between your fingers until your hands are dry.

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

- 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:
  - If an antibiotic is prescribed to use after surgery, give it as directed 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 instructed by your child’s nurse or doctor.
  - Stay away from sick people who might pass germs to your child.
  - Continue to wash your hands well at home.

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 (38°C) or as directed by your child’s doctor
- Feeling weak or sluggish or changes in your child’s activity
- Increased pain that is not relieved by pain medicine