

# 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 healthcare team about specific care of 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. 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?**

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 and 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 difficult 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 sense 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.**