



# Preparing for a Medical Procedure

## at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children

### Welcome to Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children

Preparing your child to have a procedure can be an intimidating job. The Child Life team is here to help you and your family during this time. The Child Life staff's goal is to help your family experience an environment of calm, caring and confident healthcare. This book is designed to take the mystery out of the process and give you and your child coping skills that will help you during this time.

### Pre-op Tour

Your family has the opportunity to participate in a pre-operative tour and education session with a member of our Child Life team. During the tour you and your child will learn about the hospital and what you can expect during your visit. Your child will also have the opportunity to engage in medical play/education to become familiar with the equipment he or she will be interacting with while in the hospital.

#### *Three ways to arrange a pre-op tour:*

**WEBSITE:** [RockyMountainHospitalforChildren.com/calendar](http://RockyMountainHospitalforChildren.com/calendar)

**EMAIL:** [RMHC.ChildLife@HCAHealthcare.com](mailto:RMHC.ChildLife@HCAHealthcare.com)

**CALL:** 720-754-7717



**Rocky Mountain  
Hospital for Children**



## WHAT YOU WILL SEE ON YOUR TOUR

### The tour will include:

- Admissions
- Pre-operative holding
- Operating room
- PACU or Post Anesthesia Care Unit
- Pediatric Floor
- **Other information:** The Child Life Specialist will give you information about parking, the cafeteria, packing, etc. This will be a good time to ask any questions you might still have and to talk about anything that is worrying you or your child. We will review much of the information in this book and practice some relaxation techniques your child can use during his or her stay.

## THE NIGHT BEFORE

Usually your family will have to be at the hospital very early on the day of surgery, so make sure you are prepared before going to bed.

- Speak to your physician's office about eating and drinking before the procedure. The timetables that your physician's office gives you are very important to follow to ensure your child's safety. Serious complications can occur during surgery if your child has food or drink in his/her or her stomach. If your child eats or drinks anything before surgery, the procedure may need to be delayed or rescheduled.
- Showers and baths may be delayed a few days following a procedure so a bath/shower the night before is recommended.
- If your child has long hair it would be a good idea put it in two braids on the sides of the head to help with knots and tangles.



## THE DAY OF SURGERY

### The Big Day

Remember to follow your physician's instructions regarding eating and drinking before the surgery.

- You will first go to Admissions where you will check-in and paperwork will get started.
- Next your family will go to Pre-Op Holding. In this area your child will have their vitals taken and a nurse will learn about your child's medical history. Your child will change into a hospital gown. If your child is older than 12 he/she will have an IV placed at this time. Child Life Specialists will help you and your child through this procedure.
- A Child Life Specialist will check in with your family to fully explain the processes for the day. If your child is between the ages of 2-11, the Child Life Specialist will help your child interact with the anesthesia mask by painting a scent of the child's choosing into the mask.
- The surgeon and anesthesiologist will check in with your family for consents and to fully explain the procedure and risks.
- If your child does not have an IV and is between the ages of 1-12 years old, one family member may get dressed in a "bunny suit" and can go into the operating room while your child goes to sleep.
- **Waking Up:** Your child will move to PACU (Post Anesthesia Care Unit) where you will join him/her after surgery. Children each wake in their own time from anesthesia; PACU nurses let children wake up gently on their own following a procedure. When you rejoin your child in PACU, please allow them ample quiet time to slowly wake following the procedure. Only 2 people at a time are allowed at bedside in PACU, no siblings are permitted in this area to help keep the environment calm and quiet.

## STAYING AT THE HOSPITAL

### What To Pack

If your child's procedure will require a stay in the hospital pack your bag as if you were staying in a hotel.

- Please leave all valuables (like jewelry or money) at home.
- Be sure to bring insurance cards with you the morning you check in.
- Please bring the personal bathroom items your child uses on a daily basis (toothbrush, toothpaste, brush, deodorant, lotions, make-up, hair dryer etc.). The hospital will provide some of these items, however, most people feel more comfortable with their own personal belongings. It is especially important for teenagers to be able to feel like themselves and feel good about their appearance, just as if they were outside the hospital.
- Don't forget to pack for yourself. The hospital provides linens and towels, but you will need to bring your own personal items and comfortable clothes. One parent or guardian may spend the night. No one under 18 years old is allowed to stay with a patient overnight.
- Hospital gowns are available for your child to wear. It is usually easier to wear the hospital gown initially. You may want to pack pajama bottoms or sweat pants, slippers and a robe for out-of-bed activities. Your child might feel more comfortable in his or her own clothes or pajamas, especially when friends are visiting. Choose clothes that are loose fitting and easy to get on and off.
- The hospital has linens and pillows, but if you or your child has a favorite pillow and blanket, you can bring those to help make you both more comfortable and help the room feel more like home.
- Feel free to bring tablets, headphones, hand-held games, and laptop computers. The hospital has a public WiFi connection so laptops are easy to use and can help you and your child keep up with work, school, and communicate easily with family and friends. These items are great for distraction for both you and your child while recovering. Don't forget to bring chargers or plugs. The Pediatric Unit has DVD players in the patient rooms and a fairly large selection of movies for you to borrow.
- Bring books, Sudoku/word find/word puzzle books, journals, anything your child might like to keep them distracted.
- There is no need to bring diapers, wipes, formula or baby food for younger children; these are all provided by the hospital. However, if your infant or toddler has a special bottle or cup he/she likes to use, please bring it as it can help encourage hydration after surgery.

### Recovery

- **IV:** If an IV was not placed before your child's procedure one will be placed during the procedure. This is a small, soft, plastic tube that is put in a vein with a needle; the needle is then removed leaving what looks a little like a small plastic straw. Your child will get medicine and fluids through this tube.
- **Nasal Cannula:** Many people need extra oxygen support following anesthesia. A small tube is placed under the nose and hooks over the ears to give your child oxygen during the immediate post-operative recovery.
- **Swelling:** This is common for people following surgery. This is due to the way the body is positioned during surgery and the large amounts of IV fluids that are received. It usually goes away in 1-2
- **Eating/drinking:** Your child may not feel like eating or drinking anything until his or her stomach "wakes up". Your child's nurse will let you know when you may begin to feed your child. The physician will usually have your child start slowly, often with ice chips, then will advance their diet as your child is ready. Starting to eat slowly will help prevent nausea and vomiting.
- **Discharge teaching/paperwork:** Before you are discharged, you will be given written and verbal instructions regarding pain control, activity restrictions, diet/fluid restrictions, recovery, complications and reasons to call the doctor or return to the hospital.

### Pain Control

The medical team and your physician will work with your child to monitor and manage your child's comfort following the procedure. The hospital uses several "pain scales" to help your child assess and communicate their comfort.



## TIPS AND REMINDERS FOR PARENTS

Mom and Dad, we understand that this is a very stressful time for you, and we are here to help. The following are some ideas to help relieve some of the stresses of surgery and hospitalization.

- It is important that you try to maintain as regular of a schedule and routine as possible. You should have the same behavioral expectations for your child in the hospital as at home, while being patient and understanding of his or her experience.
- Encourage your child to get up and “get ready” for the day, shower, get dressed; doing the activities that start a regular day will help him or her feel a stronger sense of normalcy. Maintain your child’s regular bedtime to avoid the challenge of breaking a new habit once your family is back into the old routine.
- Increased pain for more than two hours after an activity usually means your child has over exerted him/herself. Resist the urge to rush recovery, pushing too hard will only cause setbacks and make the recovery period last longer.
- Keep a journal or notebook with questions and take it to appointments and to the hospital. Your mind will be very preoccupied and it can be hard to remember your questions and the answers you receive.
- Bring items to distract you as well. Magazines, books, cards, movies, laptop computers, etc can help to pass the time.
- Try to be sensitive to your child’s stomach and nose when he/she first begins waking up from anesthesia; smells can trigger nausea. You may need to leave the room to eat for the first day or so.
- If your child is a pre-teen or teenager be sure to talk ahead of time and find out who they want to talk to and what information they want given out (for example teens having bowel or bladder surgery may not want details about their surgery given to their peers). Make a plan with your child’s friends for who should call and what times will be acceptable to call. It might be helpful to set up a phone tree with friends and family so your need to make calls is limited.
- Children in the hospital often times regress to old behaviors. Children who were potty trained may start wetting the bed or need old comfort items like blankets, binkies, bottles, etc. Don’t worry about these behaviors, children generally return to developmentally appropriate behaviors once they are back in a regular routine at home and school.
- As your child is recovering they might express exasperation, frustration, anger or sadness. Sometimes these negative emotions can be projected onto parents or caregivers. Be patient with your child and let him/her know you understand feeling hurt, angry, frustrated or lonely. Remind your child that you are there to help but that you expect to be treated and spoken to with respect. You are most likely not the reason for their anger – you are just a close target.
- Help support your child during recovery by setting appropriate limits surrounding activities such as the amount of time spent watching TV or sleeping. Encourage regular bed times and physical activity by turning off the TV or game systems and getting up to walk or play.
- If your child is older and you have to go back to work after your child has been discharged, be sure that your child has easy access to prepared foods. Make sure there is someone close by that your child can contact in an emergency.
- Keep in mind it takes a lot of energy to recover from surgery, be patient while your patient heals. Remember it will take a lot of rest, patience and tenacity to complete the healing process.
- Don’t forget to take care of yourself during all this. Take walks, rest when your child is resting and talk to your friends. Do what you need to do to make sure your health and your spirit stay strong so that you are able to help get your child back to full health.



## Security

Your child's safety and the security of your child's medical information are very important to the hospital. The hospital uses several tools to ensure the safety of your child and personal health information during your stay here.

- We have a security system in place to ensure that children are not taken off the Pediatric Unit without the knowledge of the staff and family. Children under the age of 12 are fitted with a band around the wrist or ankle that sounds an alarm and locks all entrance and exit points if the child is taken past the sensors. Families have the choice to decline this feature at admission or request it for children over the age of 12 if it is deemed important to a child's safety.
- **Visitor Identification:** In order to better monitor visitor presence on the Pediatric Unit, we require that all visitors sign in at the nurses' station upon arrival. Each visitor will be given a "Visitor Pass" good for one day only. Parents will be fitted with a copy of their child's armband to wear on their wrist during their child's admission. Each person entering the unit will be asked to show one of these identifiers at the main desk upon re-entering the unit.
- **Medication safety:** Every patient will have an armband placed on their wrist or ankle upon admission. The armband includes the child's name, medical record number and a barcode. This barcode will be scanned every time medications are given to your child. Each medication will also be scanned to ensure that the proper medications and dosages are being given to your child at the correct time. The nurses will also provide you with information about each medication they give your child (name of the medication, purpose, and possible side effects).
- **Information safety:** Only medical and hospital staff with a legitimate "need to know" may access, use, or disclose your child's protected health information. Each person may only access the minimum information necessary to perform his or her designated role. Upon admission, the parent/legal guardian of a child will be given a "security code". In order to protect patient confidentiality, hospital staff will not provide information on a child's status over the phone unless the caller presents this code. If you would like other family members or friends to be able to obtain updates about your child, please give them the code. As staff cannot ascertain identity of callers by voice, parents are required to use this code when calling in as well.

## School

It will be important to plan for your child's absence from school ahead of time.

- Talk to the school counselor and ask for help informing teachers and getting work ahead of time.
- While your child is recovering at home, work on homework during regular school hours. Friends and classmates can help your child keep up-to-date on what's going on in the classroom as well as at school in general.
- Make an effort to get big projects (i.e. book reports, science fair projects, etc.) finished before your child has surgery.
- If your child needs an altered schedule upon return to school, you will need to make arrangements ahead of time.
- Your Child Life Specialist or Social Worker can help you with notes for school and work.

## Friends & Family

Your friends and family are very important and if you would like to include them in your child's care we will do so whenever possible. Your family and friends are welcome to visit. However, too many visitors at once can tire or overwhelm your child. Here are some ideas for how to manage your friends and family support over the span of your child's recovery.

- The pediatric floor has no limit to parental visiting hours but other friends and family are encouraged to visit between 8am and 8pm.
- Ask visitors to come in a few at a time so you and your child don't get too tired or overwhelmed.
- Siblings are not allowed to stay the night at the hospital.
- Let your friends and family know when you are tired or need a break. It is important that you and your child get rest.
- Allow a responsible friend or family member to sit with your child while you take a walk, get something to eat or take a nap. Taking breaks will help keep your energy up. This is very important and will allow you to better help your child recover after his or her surgery.

**Parents, it is very important that you review this section with your child.** Helping your son or daughter practice and learn these skills before surgery will help him/her recover faster and will provide your child with good coping skills for pain management and relaxation. You can also use these techniques to help you relax, which may help you manage the stress of the surgery, hospitalization and recovery more effectively.

## EDUCATION

The following section is designed to help you work with your child to learn relaxation techniques. This section is worded so you can use it as a “script” or just as a guide to help your child learn and practice these techniques. Your Child Life team member will help your child learn and practice relaxation techniques and some breathing exercises your child can use during stressful situations.



### Deep Breathing/Relaxation

Deep breathing is important for two reasons: (1) it clears the lungs of the fluid and mucus that collects in them during times of little activity (during surgery and bed rest) and (2) it is the best way to help the body relax.

- Sitting or lying down in a comfortable position is best, but deep breathing will help, even if you can't get comfortable.
- Breathe in through your nose as deeply and as long as you can.
- Slowly let the air out through your mouth; making a hissing or whistling sound may help. We tend to hold our breath when we are nervous or in pain. When we do this our body stays tense, shoulders up, chest tight, arms and stomach tense. It is very important that your child blow all the air out of the lungs when he or she exhales.
- Sometimes it helps to think “Relax” or “Chill” during the breath out.
- Encourage children to drop their shoulders, let their hands relax in their lap, close their eyes and let their heads drop if that feels good.
- Children of every age can benefit from activities like bubble blowing, which can be a good way to help them breathe deep and blow all the air out of the lungs. Any tools that will help your child relax will be good for to use, even if you or your child think they are “babyish”.
- Some free apps to help with deep breathing/relaxing are “Calm”, “Stop, Breathe, Think Kids”, and “iBreathe”.





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**AMAZING** happens every day.