

## Tips to Help Your Infant Cope with Surgery

Asking questions and knowing what to expect can help reduce your stress and lessen any fears you may have. If you are anxious, your baby will sense this. Remaining calm and positive is an important way to support your baby.

### Infants may find the following stressful:

- Separation from parents
- Change to their routine
- Unfamiliar people
- Feeding restrictions
- Strange surroundings- new sights, sounds, and smells

### Preparing your infant for surgery:

- Separation from parents can be stressful for infants. Make plans for at least one familiar caregiver to be present as much as possible during your hospital stay.
- When it is time for your child to go in for surgery, they may cry as they are separated from you. Be assured that most infants stop crying within minutes of leaving their parents. They are comforted by staff and soon turn their attention to other things.
- Play games such as “Peek-a-Boo”. This helps your child learn that even though they cannot see you, you are still nearby. This can help prepare your infant for the times when they are separated from you.
- Try to keep your child’s routine as normal as possible to help with predictability and coping.
- Unfamiliar people can cause anxiety for children. Reassure and talk to your baby as new people approach.
- During the time before surgery when your child cannot eat or drink. Be prepared for some irritability.
- Bring items from home such as a favorite toy or blanket for comfort and to create a familiar surrounding.
- Bring the cup or bottle that your baby uses for after the surgery.
- It is normal for them to cry, be fussy and clingy during times of stress.
- Seek the support of family and friends to help with other siblings.
- Please do not hesitate to ask questions or explain to staff what helps your child.