

Your Child's Surgery or Procedure

Hearing that your child needs surgery or a procedure can be stressful. This information has been put together to help you and your child feel prepared.



Call your surgeon's or practitioner's office before coming to BC Children's Hospital if you notice any of the below within 72 hours of the surgery or procedure time:

- Your child has a rash.
- Your child has a cold.
- Your child has a fever above 38 degrees Celsius.
- Your child has diarrhea.
- Your child is feeling lethargic, has loss of appetite, or looks unwell.
- Your child has been in contact with someone who has a virus, such as measles, mumps, or chicken pox.
- You have other concerns about your child's health.

Preparing for the Surgery or Procedure

Preparing your Child

Talking about the surgery or procedure using pictures or stories can help children deal with unfamiliar situations. It's a good idea to include your child's siblings. Here are two ideas to help you talk about the surgery or procedure with your child:

1. Watch "[BC Children's Hospital Teck Acute Care Centre Procedures Department Orientation](#)" on YouTube and visit the [Surgery and Procedures](#) page on the [BC Children's Hospital website](#).
2. Find out as much as you can about the surgery or procedure. If you know what to expect, you will be able to better help your child.
 - Find out what your child already knows.
 - Be honest about what will happen and explain why.
 - Have a discussion with your child. The [Child Life Department](#) offers excellent tips on how to prepare your child, based on their age and development.
 - Think about ways you can comfort your child and help them stay calm on the day of the surgery or procedure.
 - You know your child the best. Bring their favourite books, toys, or devices to help keep them distracted and calm.

Preparing Yourself

- Look after yourself. If there is time while your child is having their surgery or procedure we encourage you to go for a walk or get refreshments.
- Ask questions if you are not sure about anything we are doing or saying. Write a list of your questions and bring them with you in case you forget to ask.
- Plan how you will get to BC Children's on the day of the surgery or procedure. You will need to stay close to the hospital while your child is having their surgery or procedure. Bring a book or device to help you pass the time.

Making Arrangements for the Day of the Surgery or Procedure

- Organize childcare for your other children during your child's surgery or procedure.
- For safety purposes, you must take your child home in a vehicle. If this is not possible, please let your nurse know.
- For more information on planning your visit go to [Planning Your Visit](#) on the BC Children's website.

Preparing for your Child's Recovery at Home

- Have acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) that are appropriate for your child's age at home.
- Have foods that will help if your child feels sick to their stomach (for example plain toast, crackers, or ginger ale). **Your child will be fasting before the surgery or procedure, so these foods are for after you return home.**
- Have other foods ready that will be easy for your child to swallow (for example soup, pudding, or popsicles).
- Make sure you have a child's thermometer that is working and ready to use.
- Plan for a quiet day at home where you can stay close to your child so you can watch them on the day after the surgery or procedure.

Out of Town Arrangements

- Make your travel and accommodation arrangements as soon as you know the date of the surgery or procedure.
- The [BC Family Residence Program](#) can help you organize and pay for bus and air travel. It can also help you organize and pay for a place to stay close to BC Children's. You need to provide the dates, reason for travel, your child's BC Health Care Card number, and the doctor's name.

The Day before the Surgery or Procedure

Expect a Call from Procedures and Surgical Services

You will receive a call from Procedures and Surgical Services between 11:00am and 5:00pm one working day (Monday to Friday) before your child's surgery or procedure. This is an important call. Find a quiet place, have a notepad and pen ready for taking notes, and

ask questions so you are sure of:

1. The last time your child can eat or drink.
2. What regular medication your child can take.
3. When to arrive and how long you can expect to stay at the hospital.



If your English is limited, interpreter services are available. Please discuss your needs with a staff member.



If you *do not* receive this call, please phone 604-875-2191 before 5:00pm one working day (Monday to Friday) before your child's surgery or procedure.

The Night before the Surgery or Procedure

- Give your child the prescribed preoperative medication, if any.
- Make sure your child is not wearing any makeup, nail polish, or jewelry (this includes earrings, and any other body piercings).
- Give your child a bath and wash their hair. If your child's hair is long, have it in a braid.

Fasting before the Surgery or Procedure

When your child receives an anesthetic it is **very important that their stomach is empty**. This is so they do not vomit and choke when the anesthetic is starting. If there is food in their stomach before your child's anesthetic, the food could make its way into your child's lungs while they are under anesthetic, and your child could get pneumonia.

We need your child's stomach to be as empty as possible before their anesthetic so they are safe. We understand that a hungry child can be upset and frustrated child and we know that it is really hard for a parent or caregiver to let their child be hungry. No parent or caregiver wants their child to feel hungry. However, we need your help to ensure that your child is safe when they are getting their anesthetic. Note that your child should continue to have clear fluids up to one hour before arrival time. Please encourage your child to drink clear fluids before departing for the hospital.



If you do not follow the fasting instructions, your child's surgery or procedure will be postponed or cancelled.

The Day before the Surgery or Procedure

STOP solid food at midnight.

STOP bottle feeds (formula) or tube feeds 6 hours before arrival time.

STOP breast milk 4 hours before arrival time.

STOP clear fluids 1 hour before arrival time.

- Clear fluids are fluids you can see clearly through (for example water or clear apple juice).
- Jell-O and broth are **not** clear fluids.

You will receive a call from Procedures and Surgical Services to go over your fasting instructions the working day (Monday – Friday) before your surgery or procedure.

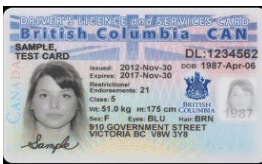
The Day before the Surgery or Procedure

What to Bring

Try to pack what you need in one backpack or bag you can carry. Your day will be easier if you pack light.

Essential Items:

- Your Child's BC Health Care Card (can look like either of the below examples).



- Loose-fitting clothes for your child to wear home.

Suggested Items:

- Your child's favourite book, toy, or blanket.
- Your child's housecoat and non-skid slippers or shoes.
- Your child's pacifier, usual feeding bottle or sippy cup.
- A pen and paper so you can take notes and write down any questions you may have.

Where to Go

The hospital campus is a big place. Check out the map and follow the directions provided below:



1. Enter the Children's & Women's campus from Oak Street (4500 Oak Street), follow the signs for the **Teck Acute Care Centre (TACC) (Entrance #53 circled in orange)**.
2. You can park in the underground parking of the TACC or in the surface spots nearby. There is also a **Valet Service** located outside of Entrance #53. There is no extra cost for this service you just pay the regular hourly or daily rate.
3. Once in the lobby of the TACC building, take the main elevators to the third or fourth floor as directed.
4. Exit the elevators and turn right and follow the signs to either:
 - Third Floor - General Procedures
 - Fourth Floor - Special Procedures

Meeting the Health Care Team

After checking in at the reception desk, you will be shown to an individual patient pre-op room. Here, you will have a chance to meet the team who will look after your child before, during and after their surgery or procedure.

1. After you help your child change into a gown, a nurse and care aide will assess your child. This includes measuring their height and weight along with their vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, pulse and oxygen level).
2. An anesthetist will talk with you about what will happen in the procedure room and how your child will fall asleep for their surgery or procedure.
3. Your child's surgeon or proceduralist will also see you before your child's surgery or procedure. This will be your chance to ask any last minute questions.
4. If your child is over the age of one year, and is not having a cardiac surgery, your family will decide with the anesthetist who is best to accompany your child into the procedure room until your child is asleep.
5. In the procedure room, you can provide comfort, distraction and support for your child.



The anesthetic will make your child go to sleep very quickly. This can look shocking to the accompanying parent or caregiver. **If you feel faint or dizzy at any time**, tell the closest nurse or doctor.

6. Once your child is asleep, a staff member will show you to the waiting area. While you wait, you can go for a short walk to get a coffee or bite to eat. This can help you feel calm and ready to support your child when they wake up.
7. After the surgery or procedure is finished, your child's doctor will come to the waiting room to explain how everything went. It is important to be available in the waiting room at this time.
8. A staff member from Procedures and Surgical Services will find you in the waiting area so you and another parent or caregiver can be by your child's side in the recovery room.

What Happens During Recovery

- As soon as it is safe to do so, the staff will invite you to be with your child after their surgery or procedure. Every effort is made to have you at the bedside before your child wakes up, however, they may be just waking up when you arrive.
- Your child may be drowsy, confused, restless, or upset when they wake up. Keep the bed rails up and stay at your child's side for their safety.
- You know your child best. If you think your child is thirsty or uncomfortable, tell your child's nurse.
- Your child will stay in recovery until they are awake and comfortable.
 - If your child is staying overnight in the hospital, a nurse will coordinate their transfer

to the ward.

- If your child is having a day surgery or procedure, a nurse will explain how you can take care of your child at home; this includes what and when to feed your child, and how to keep them comfortable.