

# Preparing for your child's Surgery

## **Support from a Child Life Specialist**

**A child life specialist is a pediatric healthcare professional that helps children and families cope with the challenges of hospitalization. Child life specialists reduce anxiety by providing age-appropriate preparation, education, and coping strategies.**

**Many parents ask, "how do I explain a surgery to my child?" In this packet you will find developmental suggestions to prepare your child for their visit to Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. You will also find a photo prep-book, so that your child can know what to expect on surgery day.**

**Studies show that children and teenagers who are prepared before hospitalization have less anxiety and fear, an easier time coping with pain, and fewer complications during recovery.**

**If you or your child would like to consult with a child life specialist prior to your visit, please ask your nurse or call 954-265-0551.**

# "How Do I Prepare my Child for their Surgery?"

Children need to know:

- 1) that they are coming to the hospital for surgery.
- 2) when they are coming to the hospital.
- 3) why they need surgery.

## Infants/Toddlers

- Bring along familiar comfort items from home (i.e. a favorite blanket, stuffed animal, or pacifier.)
- During the period when your child cannot eat, attempt to distract your child by rocking, walking, and comforting him/her.
- Try your best to remain calm (children can sense your stress, which may cause him/her to get upset too.)

## Preschoolers

- Talk with your child about their visit and what they will see. Use simple and honest words. (i.e. "sleep medicine" instead of anesthesia.)
- Have your child help pack a few toys and comfort items for their visit.
- Children learn through play. Playing doctor at home can help improve mastery and coping. Explain that going to the hospital is not a punishment for being "bad."

## School Age

- Prepare your child a few days to a week before their visit. Explain why he/she needs to visit the hospital.
- Be supportive and honest. Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings.
- At this age, kids may be more fearful of pain. Reassure your child that he/she will not feel any pain during the surgery because of their anesthesia/ "sleep medicine."

## Teens

- Talk openly about the visit. Teenagers are often uncomfortable admitting they do not understand explanations.
- Include your teen in plans and decisions. Encourage them to make a list of questions and participate in discussions.
- Validate concerns. It's important for teens to know they are allowed to be afraid and to cry. Encourage them to share their feelings with family, friends, and the healthcare team.

# **Welcome to Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital!**



1005 Joe DiMaggio Drive  
Hollywood, FL 33021

## **Entrance**



On the day of your surgery,  
you will start your visit by walking through these doors.



## Security



You will stop at security and your family members will be given a sticker name tag to wear.

## Elevators



Your family will take an elevator up to the 2nd floor.

## **2nd Floor**



*You will walk to Surgical Services for check-in.*

## **Family Lounge**



*After checking in, you will wait for your name to be called.*

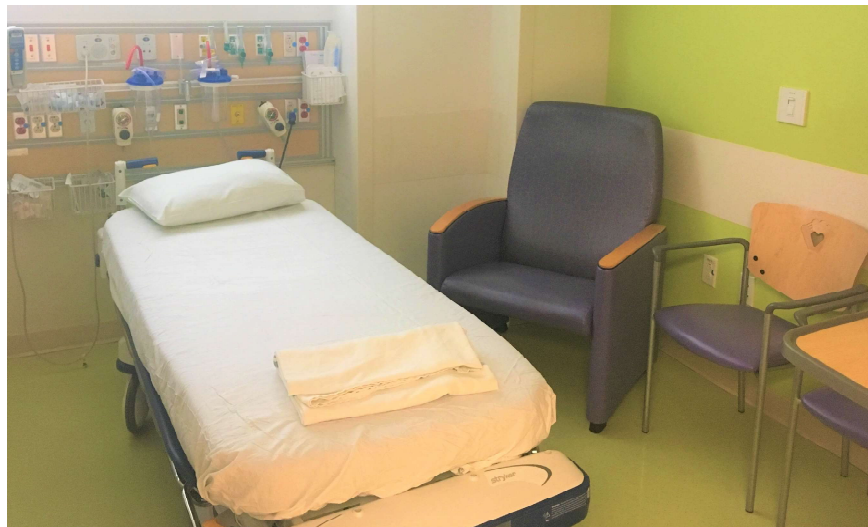
*You will be given a bracelet name tag to wear. It is important to keep the bracelet on the whole time.*

## **Vitals**



*The nurse will check your height, weight, and temperature.*

## **Pre-op Room**



*You will wait in this room to meet your doctors and nurses.*



## Stickers



The nurse will check your heart beat, blood pressure, and breathing with these stickers and wraps. No ouchies!

## Clothing



You will change into a hospital gown.  
Some hospital workers wear special clothes too.



## Play



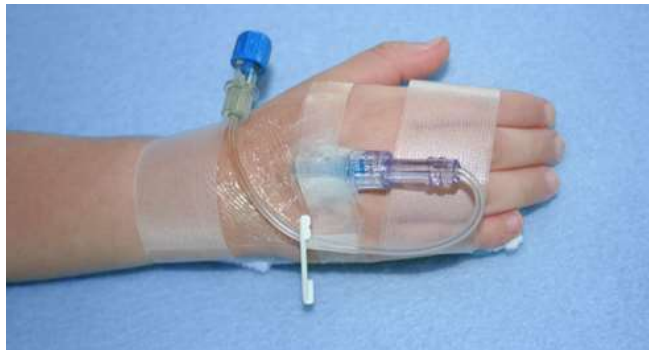
You can play with games, toys, or do art activities in your room while you wait for your surgery.

## Meeting your Anesthesiologist



The doctor who will be giving you your anesthesia (sleep medicine) will come meet you. Some kids get their sleep medicine through a mask. Others get it through a medicine straw called an IV. Your anesthesiologist will tell you which way you will go to sleep.

# IV

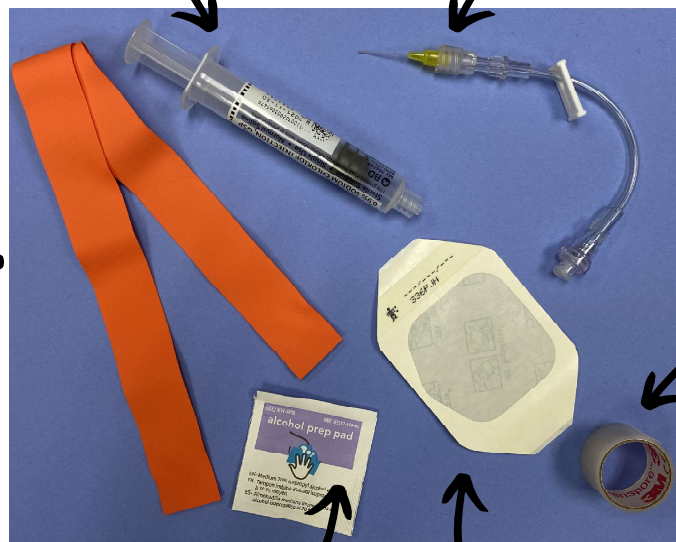


If you need an IV beforehand, it may look like this. IV means "in the vein." Your veins are the blue lines on your hand/arm. You may feel a quick pinch, but once the straw is in the perfect spot, the poke comes out and all that's left is the soft medicine straw.

# IV

Water or Medicine

Soft Straw



Stretchy  
Rubber Band

Tape

Soap

Bandaid

## Relaxing Medicine



Some kids (under 10 years) may need to drink relaxing medicine before their surgery. We also call it "happy juice" because it may make you feel silly. There are no ouchies!



Your hospital bed has wheels. You will take a ride down the hallway to the operating room.

## Operating Room

These are lights

You will lie on a new bed that has a blanket & pillow.



These are T.V's. to show pictures & measurements.

This is the room where you will get your sleep medicine.

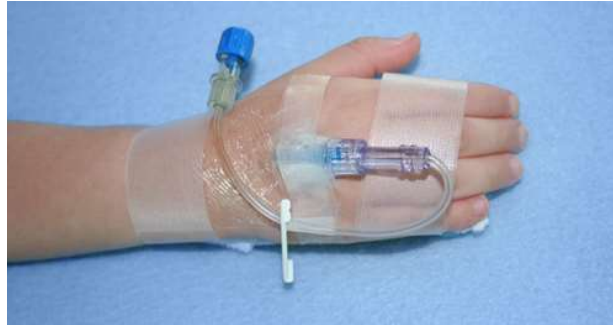
## Stickers



Inside the operating room, the nurses will make sure that all of your stickers are on and working. You will also be given a blanket to keep you warm.



## Going to Sleep



Your doctor will give you a special sleep medicine to help you sleep during your surgery. You will not feel anything during the surgery, and you won't wake up until we are all finished!

## Waking Up



If you went to sleep with the mask, then you will wake up with a medicine straw called an IV on your hand or arm. The tiny straw comes out once it is time to go home.

## Recovery Room



When your surgery is done, you will move to the recovery room (wake up room). Your family may be with you when you wake up.

## Recovering



When you wake up, you may have a popsicle, apple juice, or slushy.

## **Overnight Room**



*If you have to spend the night on the 3rd or 4th floor, you will move to a room like this. A family member will be able to spend the night with you too.*

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*If you have to spend the night on the 3rd or 4th floor, you will move to a room like this. A family member will be able to spend the night with you too.*



## **Wheelchair ride**



*When it's time to go home, you will go for a wheelchair ride out to your car.*

## **Hooray! You did it!**

