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My Surgery
Social Story

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A note for parents/caregivers:

This book was written for patients of different ages. Patients also have different reasons for needing surgery. Because of this, some sections may not apply to your child.

Read this first and choose the information you think will help them. Some children can cope with a lot of information. Other children become anxious when given too much information. For some children, just the pictures will be enough and you can make up the story! You know your child best. This book follows the process of falling asleep by breathing anesthesia through a mask. Although this is how most patients will fall asleep, for some children it is not the best plan. In some cases anesthesia will be given by IV. How your child will fall asleep will be assessed by the anesthesiologist on the day of the surgery.

We encourage you to be as much a part of your child's surgery experience as possible. For most surgeries you can be with you child until it is time to go to the surgery room and again when they are brought out of the recovery room. If you have more questions or would like to schedule a Child Life consult (includes medical play and/or a tour), please contact:

Rady Children's Hospital
Child Life Specialist
(858) 576-1700, ext. 223321



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I am going to see the doctor at Rady Children's Hospital to have surgery. First, we will check in at the front desk and then we will go to the surgical waiting area.

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I will go to the registration desk with my family. We will answer some questions.

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Then I will get a bracelet with my name and birthday so the doctor knows who I am.

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I will wait with my family in the waiting area until they call my name. I can watch TV and play with my favorite toy that I brought from home.

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Often, kids bring a favorite stuffed animal or blanket from home to comfort them. What will you bring with you?

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The nurse will call my name. We will go to a different room with my family (1 or 2 adults) to measure how tall I am and how much I weigh.

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The nurse will check my temperature. The nurse might touch the thermometer to my head or the side of my face near my ear. Some kids say it tickles.

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The nurse will also place a clip on my finger. It has a cool red light! It is called a pulse oximeter. It will tell them how I am breathing. It won't hurt.

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The nurse will wrap a band around my arm. It will feel tight for a short time. My family can help me count to 20. If I hold very still this job will move quickly. It won't hurt. The nurse will wait with me while the machines tell them I'm healthy!

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Next, I'll go to the "getting ready room." I'll meet a lot of people while I am in this room and they will help me get ready for my surgery. They are all very nice.

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Then, I will change into hospital pajamas and socks. The PJs look like a long shirt that opens in the back. If I need help, my family can help me.

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It's okay to feel scared when I am at the hospital. If I am feeling nervous or have questions, I can talk to a Child Life Specialist. A Child Life Specialist's job is to help me to understand what's going on and make my hospital visit easier.

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Next, I will meet the sleep doctor, or anesthesiologist, who will give me my sleep medicine so I will not feel anything during my surgery. Some kids say that the mask feels soft and squishy. I can ask to help put the lip gloss in the mask.

Which flavors would you choose?



Strawberry Watermelon



Tropical Punch Cotton Candy Sugar

** options may vary*

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It is normal to feel nervous or worried about surgery. I might need to take some medicine to help me relax. I might drink the medicine through a cup or syringe.

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I will say "see you soon!" to my family. I can walk with the nurse or ride in the bed to the surgery room. If I ride in the bed, I will use seat belts to keep me safe. My doctors and nurses will take good care of me. I will see my family when I wake up.

Note: In some cases a parent may be allowed to accompany their child back to the OR. Please speak to your surgery team.

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In the surgery room, I will lie on a new bed with a purple pillow. I will see the doctors and nurses that I met earlier in the getting ready room. They will be wearing masks, hats and gloves to help keep me safe from germs.

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The sleep doctor will put my special mask on right over my nose and mouth and I will fall asleep for a while. It won't hurt.

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When my surgery is all done, the doctor will help me slowly wake up. When I wake up I will be in a special room called the wake up room (recovery room).

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When I wake up, I may have an IV in my arm or hand. This is a tiny flexible “straw” that helps give me medicine and water. There will be tape to keep it safely on my arm. The IV stays on my arm. The nurse will take it off when it is time to go home.

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While I am in the wake up room I can watch TV and see my family! I may be able to have some juice, Gatorade or a popsicle.

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If I have to stay overnight in the hospital, I will go to my hospital room. Someone in my family can spend the night with me in my hospital room. I can ask the doctor if I can play with toys or watch a movie.

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When my doctors say it is okay, I can go home! Everyone is proud of me for being brave and strong!

My Surgery Day Plan

On surgery day I will bring a comfort item:

- Favorite toy
- Favorite book
- Favorite stuffed animal
- _____

While I wait for surgery I will:

- Talk to my family
- Play a game
- Watch TV
- Draw, color, read
- _____

As I fall asleep I would like to:

- Have a flavor in my mask
- Listen to music
- Help hold the mask on my face
- See how high I can count before I fall asleep
- _____

When I am able to drink/eat I would like to have:

- Popsicle (red, orange or purple)
- Gatorade
- Juice
- _____



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We would love to meet you...

Our Pre-Operative tour is offered Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 p.m. No reservations necessary.

This orientation includes a walking tour, an information session and an opportunity to ask questions. The tour is designed to help patients and families become familiar and comfortable with Rady Children's Hospital prior to surgery.

Please check in at the Acute Care Pavilion, 1st floor, Surgery Information Desk.
3010 Children's Way, San Diego, CA 92123

