



I am having surgery.

(Inpatient)



A note to caregivers and medical providers:

- This book will detail the steps of having a surgery at Rady Children's Hospital while staying on an inpatient unit.

This book was written for patients of different ages and language levels. You can determine which language and information is best to use for your child. You know your child best.

- Not all sections will apply to your child/patient. For example, some patients already have an IV before they go to the OR. Some patients stay overnight after their surgery and others go home the same day. Read this first and work with your medical team to tailor the story to your child's needs.

Some children benefit from distraction (e.g., watching YouTube during the IV, transition to the OR, or induction) while others prefer a reward after a procedure or test. Please see the customizable visual on the last page of this story. This is one way to present the idea of a prize/reward to your child (e.g., "First surgery, then *[insert prize here]*").

- We recommend filling out the Autism Friendly Questionnaire in preparation of your surgery. The nurse assigned to your child can help you to complete this questionnaire.

If you have more questions about strategies, please contact the Autism Friendly Health System Initiative at autismfriendly@rchsd.org

Sincerely,
The RCHSD Autism Friendly Health System Initiative



I am currently staying at the hospital. Today I am going to have a surgery to [insert language you are using to describe surgery e.g., help my stomach feel better]



I cannot eat or drink anything before my surgery.

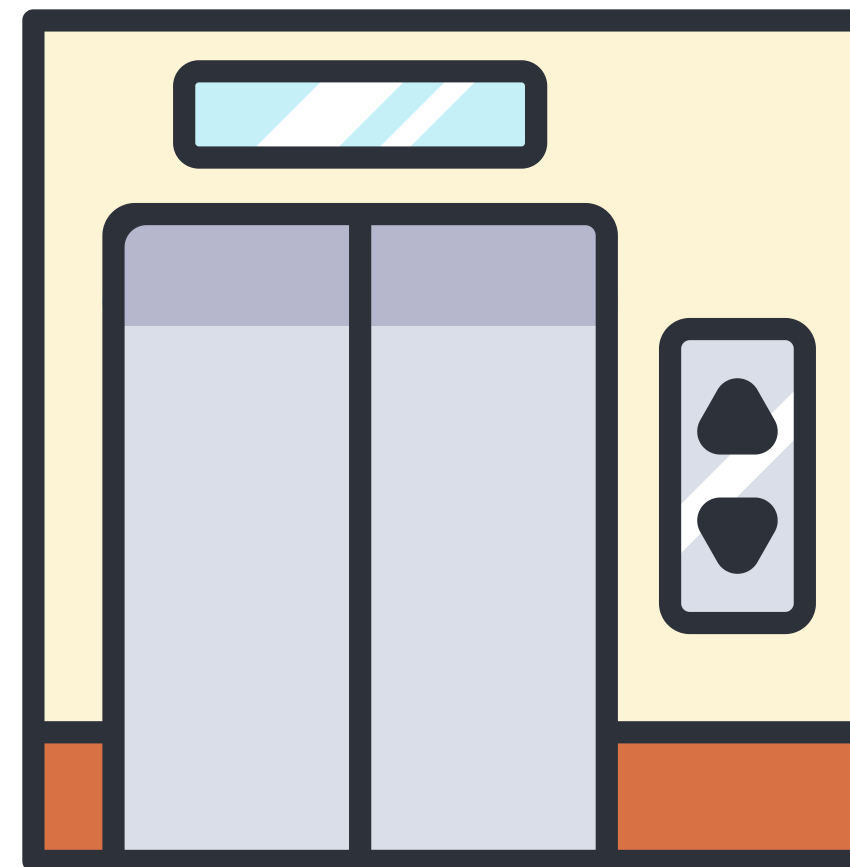
Note to caregivers: Your medical team will let you know how long your child has to refrain from eating and drinking before their procedure. It can be useful to make a schedule to structure their time and focus on activities they can do while they wait.

Many children are able to eat and drink as soon as they wake up, but you will want to confirm with your provider as this depends on the type of procedure your child is having.





**I will ride in my hospital bed or
a wheelchair and go down the
elevator.**



I will go down a long hallway.



I will wait here while the doctor and nurse ask me and my caregiver some questions.



**I might feel nervous or worried.
It is normal to feel this way.**

**I might take some medicine to
help me relax.**

**I can drink the medicine in a cup
with a straw or a syringe.**



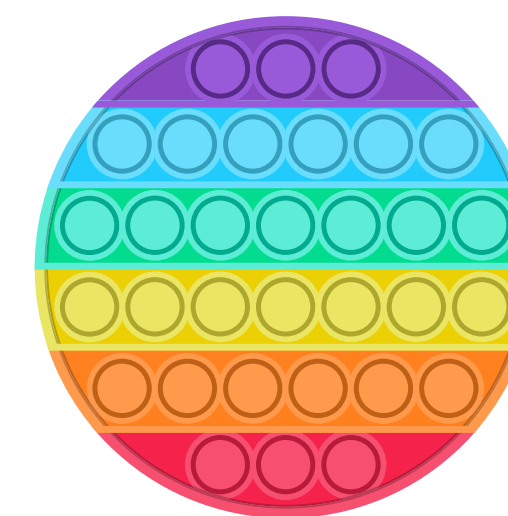
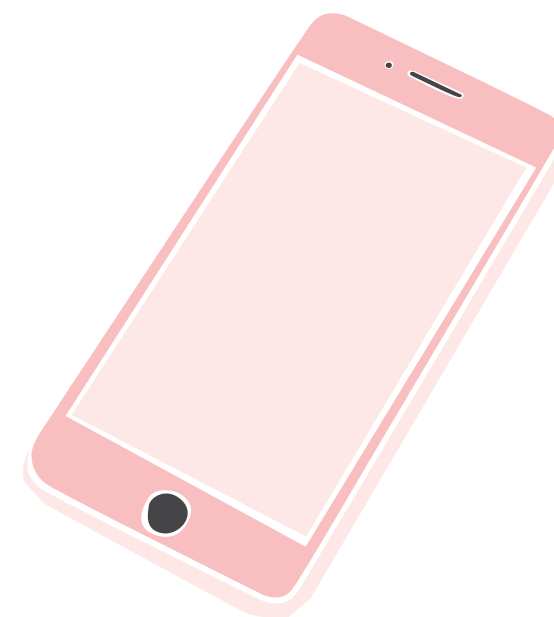
Next, I will say goodbye to my [caregiver]. I will see them when I wake-up!

Note to caregivers: in some cases a caregiver will be allowed to walk back with their child. Please speak to your surgery team to determine if this is appropriate for your child.



It's ok to feel nervous.

**If I am nervous, then I can hold
my [insert item you brought with
you for child to hold].**



Note to caregivers: You may bring a sensory, comfort, or distraction item for your child to hold.

The nurse will push my chair or bed down the hallway.



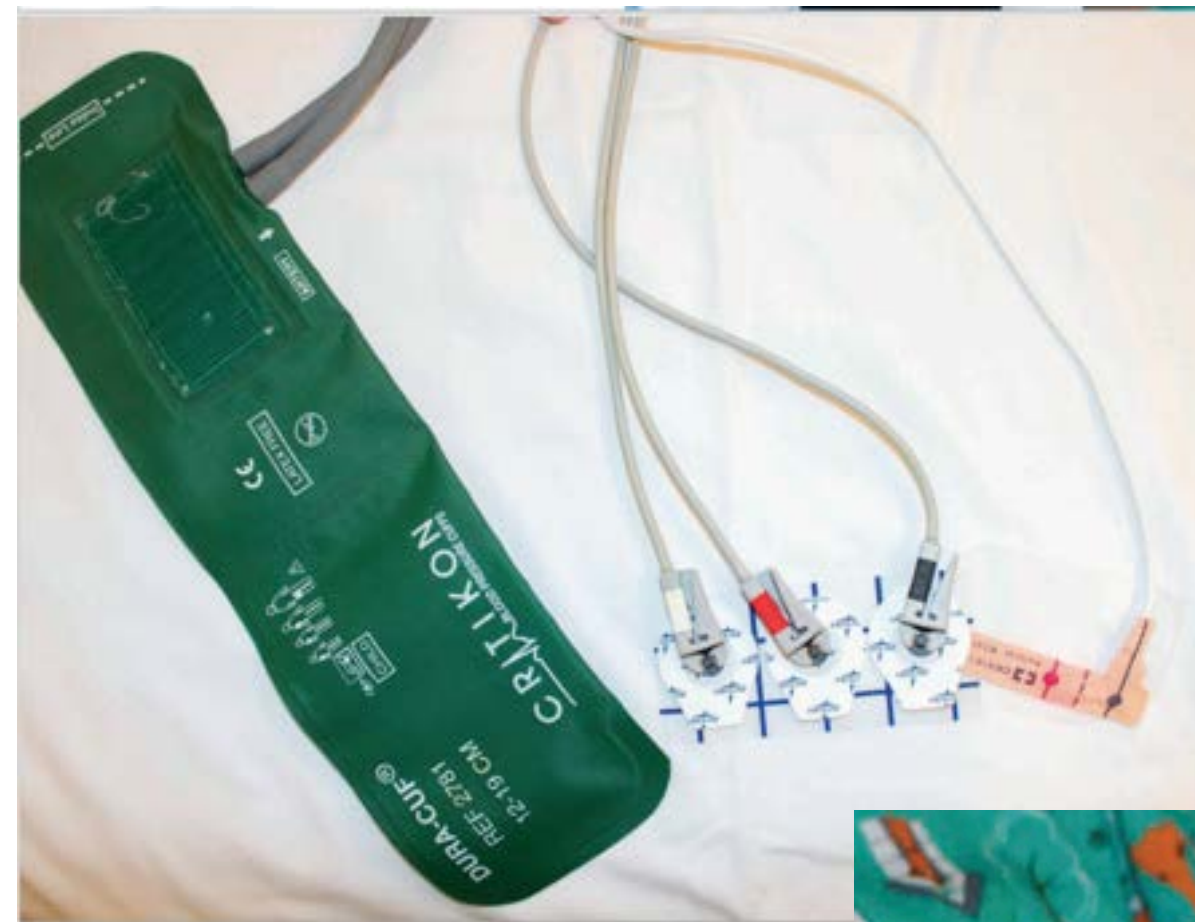
I will go into a new room with
bright lights, a bed, and a lot of
equipment.



Now it is time for my sleep medicine.

I might get the medicine in a straw in my hand or breathe it through a mask.





When I wake up, I might have stickers, a blood pressure cuff, and a straw in my hand.

These are tools to help keep my body healthy and safe.

I will keep them on.



Note to caregivers: Please let your team know if any of these items will agitate your child and we will work to remove them as soon as it is medically safe to do so.

Next, the nurse will talk to me.

**They will let my [caregiver]
know I am awake!**



Now it is time to [insert next step for your child].

Note to caregivers: ask your provider if your child will be staying overnight or going home the same day.



I did a great job completing my procedure.

Now it's time for [insert child's preferred activity or reward].



Note to caregivers: If your child is staying overnight, it may be helpful to have a preferred activity to transition to when they arrive back to their room.



The End

Note to caregivers: Please review the following pages for additional visuals that may be utilized to prepare for the visit.

Caregivers:

Here is a sample “**first-then**” visual if your child is earning a reward after the surgery. Please use the template on the next page and add your own picture of the reward your child is earning under the word, “**then.**”

You can present this by saying,
“**First surgery, then legos.**”

FIRST	THEN
	

FIRST



THEN

“First surgery, then _____.”



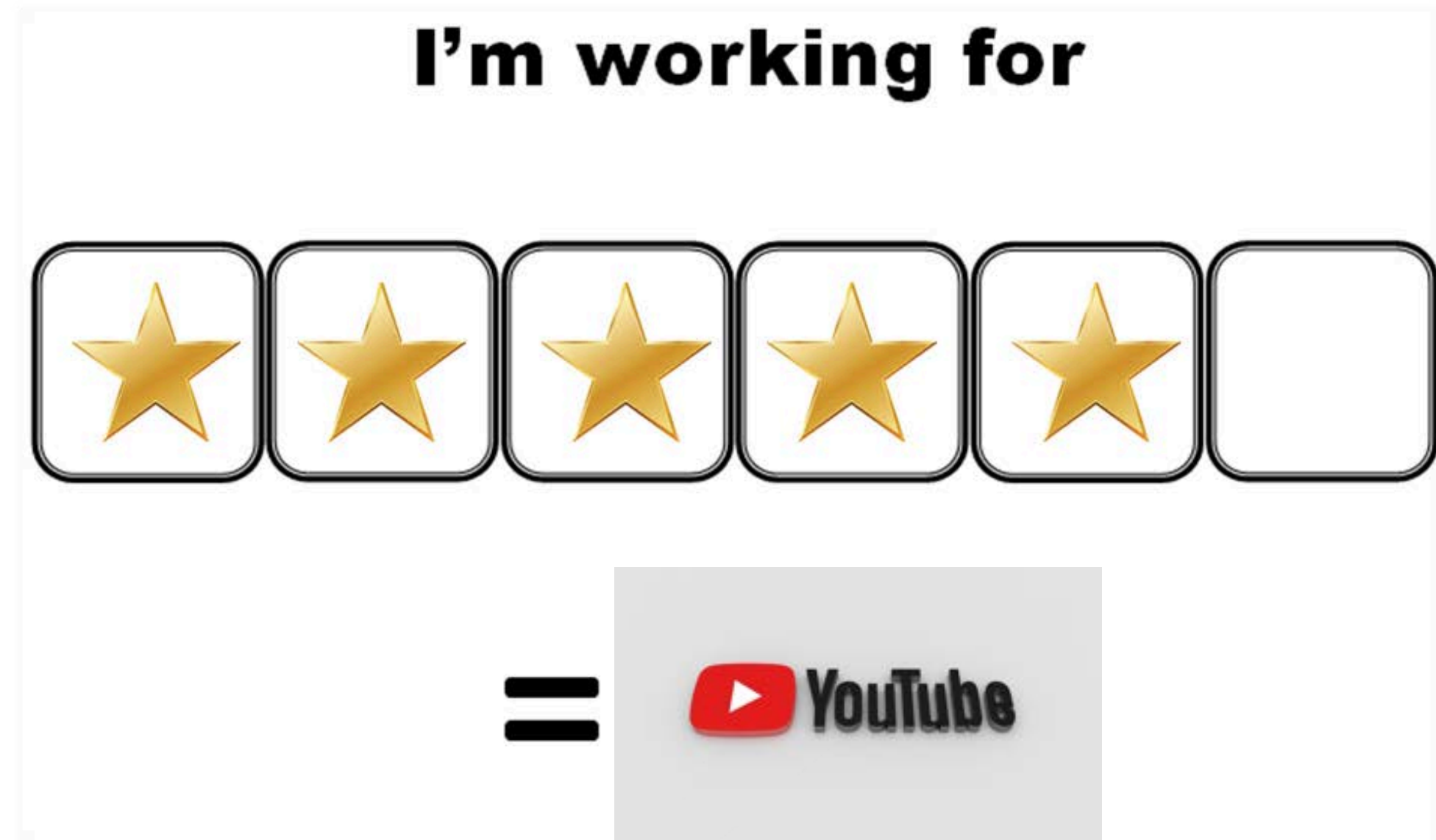
Reward Chart

Another way to present the idea of a prize/reward is with a **reward chart**.

A reward chart can help the child understand how they will earn their reward. They can earn a star or check mark for completing each step of the visit.

This can increase motivation during the appointment.

Please customize with a picture of what your child is motivated to earn on the next page.



I'm working for

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Visual Schedules

If your child benefits from the use of visual schedules, the next page may be helpful. As you point to each picture, you can briefly explain what will happen:

I will ride the elevator downstairs.

Next, I might take some medicine.

I will say goodbye to my [caregivers].

The nurse will bring me to a new room with a bed and bright lights.

I will breathe in the sleepy medicine with a mask.

When I wake up, [insert your child's specific plan here].

Then you will be all done and can [insert reward here]!

