

# Cleft Surgery at the John Radcliffe Children's Hospital - Frequently asked questions from parents

## What time should we arrive at the hospital?

You will receive a letter inviting you to the pre-operative assessment and the operation date and this will include the time that you should arrive to the ward.

## How long will we have to wait until our child goes to theatre?

When you arrive on the day, the surgical team will be able to give you an estimate of the time your child will go to theatre. It is possible that you will have to wait a little while, but there's lots of toys to keep your little one entertained!

## Which ward do we need to go to before the operation?

It is most likely that you will go to Robin's Ward on Level 1 of the Children's Hospital. This will be indicated on your invitation letter, so make sure to check, in case it is different.



## Can we stay with our child while they have the anaesthetic?

One parent or carer can go down to theatre, but we do ask that you leave once they are asleep.

## How long will the operation last?

This will vary depending on the operation your child is having, but the medical team will keep you regularly informed of their progress. It is possible that the operation will last longer than expected, but you will given updates to keep you informed.

## What happens when our child wakes up?

You will be called by the recovery nurse as soon as your child is ready. It can take some children longer to wake up than others, but there will be a nurse with them all the time. You will then be able to see your child, and go with them back to their ward.

## How long will they need to stay in hospital?

Most children will stay in hospital for one or two nights, but this depends on the type of surgery they are having. As long as they can eat and drink without too much difficulty, and the medical team are pleased with their progress, you will be discharged home.

## Can we stay overnight with them?

Only one parent or carer is able to stay with the child overnight. It may be possible to find onsite accommodation for another parent. Please speak with your cleft nurse to find out more about this.

## What are the visiting hours?

Parents are welcome to visit the ward at any time, along with brothers and sisters, although we ask that all children are supervised. Other visitors are welcome until 7pm when children start going to bed.

## What facilities are there for parents?

If you are staying overnight, you can bring a sleeping bag or blanket and pillows. There are several options for food and drink, including Pret, the League of Friends Café, WHSmith and M&S foods.

Ronald McDonald House can provide shared washing facilities for parents staying with their children.

Please ask your cleft nurse for more details.

## What kind of pain relief will our child have?

This will depend upon the type of surgery your child is having and whether they have any allergies to specific medication.

Usually, there will be regular ibuprofen, paracetamol, anaesthetic spray and possibly morphine as a liquid by mouth.

## How long will they need pain relief?

We typically recommend that you continue to provide pain relief for a week after the operation, but some children will need it for up to two weeks. You will need your own ibuprofen and paracetamol to use at home.

## Will we be able to speak to our cleft nurse?

One of the cleft nurses will visit you on the ward after your child's operation. If this is not possible, they will come and see you the day after.

## Will we see the surgeon while we are in hospital?

Yes. You will see the surgical team before and after the operation.

## What food and drink should we bring?

The hospital provides food and drink for your child, but you are welcome to bring some of their favourites too! They won't be able to eat until after their surgery so it might be best to keep them hidden until then. Any palate surgery will require a soft diet for 2 - 4 weeks after the surgery, so please keep this in mind.

## What should we pack?

- ⇒ Any medication that your child is currently taking.
- ⇒ Clothes that open up at the front - they may get stained from dribbling after the operation so don't bring anything too new or precious. Mittens or socks for their hands to help stop them putting their fingers in their mouth can also be very useful.
- ⇒ Toiletries and nappies and a soft toothbrush if your child has teeth.
- ⇒ Baby formula, bottles, teats and open cup.
- ⇒ Favourite toys or comforter. There is also a playroom with toys on the ward.
- ⇒ Money for meals (for parents).

## More questions?

Speak to your cleft nurse in the first instance, or feel free to call the Spires Cleft Centre on 01865226965 and we will be happy to answer them.

