

Inform your child of the planned surgery **1 week** prior to the appointment. You can use age appropriate books, or check your hospital's website for anesthesia/surgery preparation videos, to help familiarize your kid with what will happen as well as open dialogue for questions.

1-2 days prior, discuss the schedule for the day, what time the appointment is, where it will take place, and what will be happening after (going home, going to the park, eating lunch).

When kids ask...

What is surgery?

"Doctors helping your body"

"You will not be awake while the doctors are helping/fixing your body, you will be get medicine called anesthesia that will make you sleep during surgery so you won't feel anything (**see anesthesia script).

Why do I have to have surgery?

Make a concrete connection by pointing out something they have been experiencing -

- What symptoms are they feeling? What are doctors checking? What is feeling different about their body?

Help them understand the part of their body that needs help and why

- "The bone in their leg broke, the doctors will use medicine and tools to help heal the broken part, so then your leg can continue growing strong and help you do all the things you like to do - dance, run"

What happens before surgery?

If you have access to visuals, give the child the option to see them to share more detail

- Pictures in a book, diagram, what the body part looks like

"That morning you won't be able to eat. The sleep medicine helps your whole body go to sleep, so your stomach goes to sleep too and won't be able to do its job of digesting food."

What happens after Surgery?

"You might feel groggy or super sleepy for a while, kind of how it feels when you wake up super super early in the morning."

Remind them...

- "mom/dad/caregiver will be right there with you, and a nurse will be there taking care of you."
- "when you wake up let anyone know if you are uncomfortable anywhere in your body. "

Be honest that "they may be sore in a specific area, and a nurse will be there to give them medicine to help them feel better."

Support them in understanding what will be different:

- Will there be a bandage?
- Will there be a noticeable difference to their body?
- Will their way of everyday life change after? (medicine, a tube)