

Petite Prep Guide: Surgery

Helping you prepare and support your child.

WHAT TO SAY:

explain

What is Surgery?

You can say: “The doctors want to help your body by doing something called surgery. Surgery is when doctors help the inside of your body. Before surgery, you will get a medicine called anesthesia that will make your body go to sleep. With this sleeping medicine you will not feel, hear, or see anything during surgery.

prepare

What are the steps?

You can say:

- The morning of the surgery we might have to follow specific instructions like no eating breakfast.
- We will go together to where your surgery will happen.
- Before your surgery starts you might need to change into some hospital pajamas. A nurse might check your body by listening to your breathing, checking your heart with a stethoscope, taking your height and weight, and giving your arm a quick hug to check your blood pressure.
- The surgery happens in a very clean room with a bed, some big lights, some computers, and a team of people wearing matching clothes, hats and masks to keep from sharing germs.
- You will get the sleeping medicine either through a mask to breathe in or through an IV (small straw connected to your hand or arm).
- Once you are asleep the surgery team will help your body.
- After the surgery team is all done, the sleeping medicine doctor will stop giving you the sleeping medicine.
- You will wake up in a different room called the “wake up room” with your family there with you and nurses there to help you.

WHAT TO DO:

coping plan

Together, you can make a plan for what helps your child feel calm and in control. Here are some ideas that other kids have shared:

- “It is helpful to have a plan of something you want to be thinking about, or talking about, or humming when getting the sleeping medicine.”
 - What do they want to think about, listen too, talk about, sing, while they get the sleeping medicine.

play & practice

- Play through the steps with a doll to help them understand in a familiar way.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR TEAM:

support

- Is there another room where the anesthesia will be given?
- Can a parent/caregiver remain with the child as they receive the anesthesia?
 - If parent can be present with the child, have the parent be the main person in the child’s line of sight.

Emotional Support

- If your child is highly anxious about the experience you can ask if there are medication options to support relaxation?
- Is there a child life specialist to provide preparation, support, or coping tips?