

OPERATION DAY



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL



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MassGeneral Hospital
*for Children*SM



By
Lora Feltham, MS CCLS, Child Life Specialist
and
Anne Marie Fiore, MS, RN, NP, Nurse Practitioner
Photographs by
Caroline Phillips Buttner

Dear _____,

(Write your name on this line)

A lot of kids feel scared or nervous about going to the hospital. The hospital can seem like a big place where they see lots of new faces, people wearing special clothes, equipment and machines. Some children feel better when they know what is going to happen, what will hurt, and most of all, want to know when they can go home! This book tells you about those things.

A lot of children go to the hospital to have an operation. An operation is when the doctors and nurses try to fix a part of your body that is not working right. So read with someone in your family and learn about the many people, noises, smells, tastes, and things to see in the hospital.

Write down any questions you have so you remember to ask them of your nurse.

People go to the hospital for many reasons. Sometimes it is because they do not feel well, were hurt in an accident, or part of their body is not working right and they need to have it fixed.

Other times they need a check-up to find out why they do not feel well. And many times children and adults need nurses to give them medicine and care during the day and all night long.

No one ever comes to the hospital because they were bad or did something wrong. A hospital is a place where people take care of you, so you can feel better and go home.

Whatever the reason is that you come to the hospital, all the nurses, doctors, and hospital workers will give you “special care”.



BUT WHY DO I HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL!

SPECIAL QUESTIONS. SPECIAL FEELINGS.

Before you come to the hospital for your operation, you may have many questions to ask and feelings to share with your doctors, nurses, and family. Here are some questions and feelings that some children have talked about:

- Why do I have to go?
 - Will I be alone?
- Can Mommy and Daddy stay with me?
 - What will I eat?
 - Can I play?
- Will other children be there?
 - I’m scared!
 - I’m sad!
- What will hurt?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- What will I look like after my operation?

Can you think of more special questions and feelings?

Whether you come to the hospital for a day visit or to sleep over, you can bring Teddy or any favorite toy or book you like!

Some things you might want to bring if you are sleeping over are a favorite blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal. You can pack your own clothes and pajamas too. Many bring pictures of their family and friends.

Whatever you bring, make sure you put your name on it so that everyone knows it belongs to you!

While you are in the hospital, your brothers, sisters, teachers, friends and other people in your family will miss you a lot. They can visit, call you or write letters.

"CAN I BRING TEDDY?"



Write the name and address of your hospital here.

Before most children come to the hospital for their operation, they visit a place called the Pre-Admission Clinic.

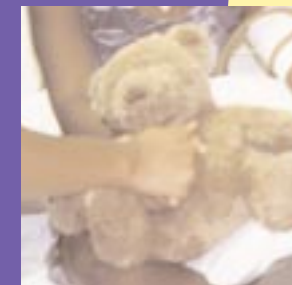
At the clinic, you and your family will talk with nurses, doctors and other people who will ask you many questions, do things to check how well you are, and get you ready for your operation.

You will have your temperature taken.

A hospital worker will listen to your heart and lungs with a stethoscope, weigh you on a scale, see how tall you are and check your blood pressure with a blood pressure cuff. This small cuff is wrapped around the top of your arm and pumped up like a balloon. When the cuff is puffed up it may feel like your arm is getting a tight hug.

You will also be asked to go to the bathroom in a small cup. This sounds funny, but it is another test the doctor does to make sure you are healthy for your operation.

These things do not hurt, but most children are happy when they are done!



Another thing you must have during your visit at the Pre-Admission Clinic is a blood test. A hospital worker will gently put a needle in your arm or prick your finger. It is okay to cry if it hurts, but it is important to stay real still so the blood test will be over quickly. There is a special white cream that you can ask for which will make the blood test hurt less.

Here are some things to do when you have a blood test to help make it easier:

- ..sit on a special person's lap
- ..squeeze someone's hand
- ..count to ten
- ..think of being somewhere special
- ..take slow, deep breaths in your nose and blow them out slowly through your mouth
- ..tell a story
- ..sing a silly song
- ..spell words out loud
- ..hug a teddy bear or other special friend.

"WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?"

"OH NO, I NEED WHAT?"

WHEN I SLEEP OVER?



Sometimes when children come to the hospital for an operation they need to stay overnight until they get better, then they can go home. If you need to stay overnight, there is a special sleeping chair next to your hospital bed for Mom, Dad or another adult in your family to sleep. During the daytime and before bedtime, brothers, sisters, friends and other special people can visit too.

Some children may be able to go home right after their operation on the same day they came to the hospital. Your doctor will let you know how long you need to stay in the hospital and when you can go home!

“WHAT IS AN X-RAY?”

Sometimes your doctor wants you to have X-ray pictures taken by X-ray machines. An X-ray machine is like a big camera. It takes pictures of your body and shows how the inside of your body looks.

X-ray pictures are taken in a room which is a little dark and feels a little cold. It is helpful to know that a hospital worker, your parents, a nurse or another person can always see you and is always nearby. When the camera starts making clicking noises, CLICK, CLANG, BUZZ, you will know your picture is being taken.

Having an X-ray picture taken does not hurt, but you need to stay still so your picture will not come out fuzzy. Sometimes the hospital worker will cover a part of your body with a heavy apron. This apron stops the X-ray machine from taking a picture of that part of your body.



A doctor called an anesthesiologist (an-es-the-si-ol-o-gist) will talk to you and your parents before your operation. This doctor will give you medicine called anesthesia. This medicine helps you to be in a special sleep during your operation. The anesthesia medicine does not hurt, it just makes you sleepy.

“WHAT IS AN-ES-THE-SIA?”

When you are in this special sleep, you do not feel anything. When your operation is over, the doctor stops giving you the anesthesia medicine and you wake up from your special sleep.

There are many ways the doctor can give anesthesia medicine. For babies and young children the medicine may go where your mom sometimes takes your temperature, in your bottom.

Sometimes you may get anesthesia medicine by a mask. The doctor puts the mask on your nose and mouth and asks you to take deep breaths. The doctor may put yummy flavors like bubblegum or cherry in the mask so it will smell nice. Another way you may get your anesthesia medicine is by I.V. Soon you will become sleepy and go into your special sleep.



When you wake up from your operation, you will have an I.V.

The word I.V. stands for intravenous which means “In your Veins”.

If you look at your hand, sometimes you can see your veins. They look like blue lines. An I.V. is a tiny plastic tube in one of your veins that gives your body medicine and a drink of sugar water when you are not feeling well.

Your I.V. is taped so it will not move. Your I.V. will be taken out as soon as possible after your operation. Your doctor or nurse will let you know when you do not need it any more.

“WHAT IS AN I.V.?”

On the day of your operation you may feel hungry because you can not eat or drink. The doctors want your tummy to be empty to keep it from getting upset during your operation.

When you come to the hospital you will get a bracelet with your name on it. This lets the people in the hospital know who you are even when you are sleeping. You will be given some hospital pajamas and slippers to wear. These hospital pajamas are called johnnies. You will also be given a special hat to wear!

For your operation, the doctors and nurses will be dressed in special clothes to keep themselves, you, and the operating room very clean. They wear gowns, hats, gloves, slippers, and a mask that covers their mouth and nose. When they have their masks on you can tell if they are smiling by looking at the crinkles next to their eyes.



TODAY IS MY OPERATION DAY!

When it is time for your operation, hospital workers from the operating room will let you and your parents know.

You will walk or get a ride on a bed with wheels and rails on the side.

You and your parents will go to a room to meet the anesthesiologist.

The anesthesiologist will give you some anesthesia medicine to help you go into your special sleep for your operation.

Remember, this special sleep lasts for your whole operation.

And you will not feel anything.

OPERATION DAY!



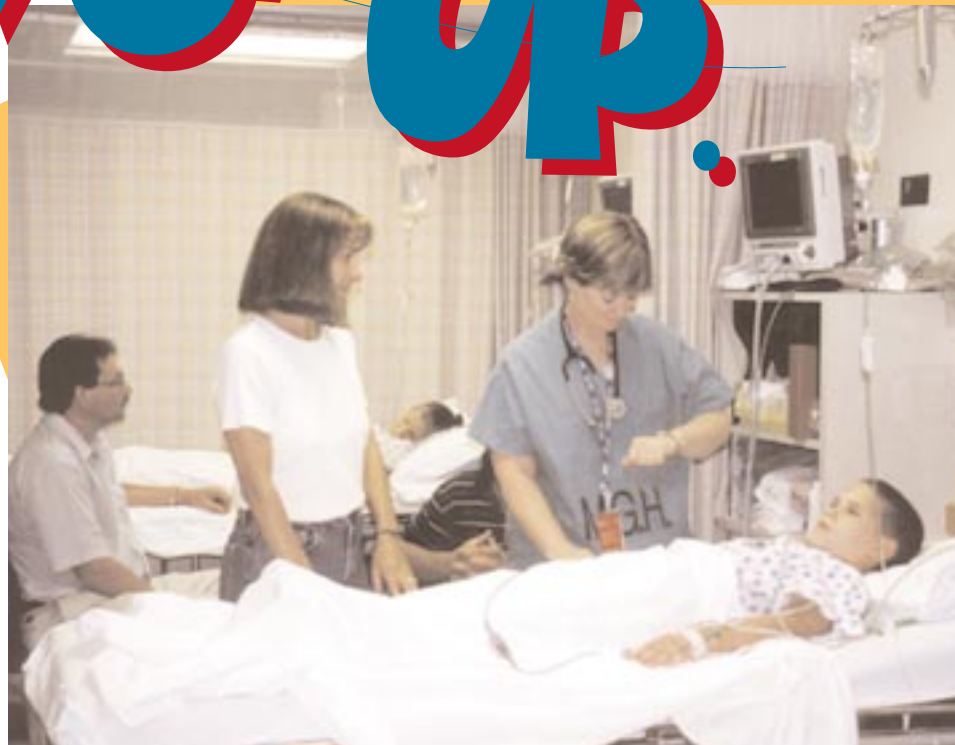
WAKING UP!

When your operation is all over you will wake up in another room called the PACU (Post Anesthesia Care Unit). Your parents can visit you in the PACU. There will be a lot of nurses, also, ready to take care of you.

There will be a lot of people in this room because they are waking up from operations too. You may be a little sleepy and not feel well. The nurses will give you medicine to help you feel better.

You will hear a lot of sounds and beeping noises. A nurse will take your blood pressure and listen to your heart. You will have some bandages where you had your operation.

If you need to sleep over, a nurse will take you to your hospital room when you are awake. If you do not need to sleep over, the nurse will take you back to the room where you got your hospital pajamas, except this time you will get dressed to go home!



If you need to stay overnight at the hospital, you will have your own bed. It may look different than your bed at home. There are rails on the side of this bed which go up and down to keep you safe. There is a control button in your room that you can push to call your nurse anytime for any reason.

Your hospital bedroom will have a television, telephone, bathroom, and cabinets for your things. There will be a sleep chair next to your bed so your visitors will have a place to sit down. This is also where your Mom, Dad or other adults in your family may sleep during the night to keep you company. You may also share your room with another child who may become your friend.

SLEEPING OVER!

In order to take care of you, the nurses will check you many times during the day and all through the night. A different nurse takes care of you during the daytime, dinnertime, and at bedtime. Your primary nurse is the nurse that takes care of you the most.

The nurses and doctors will listen to your heart, lungs and tummy sounds as your body wakes up from the special anesthesia medicine. You will have to take deep breaths to wake up your lungs.

As soon as your belly growls, your doctor will slowly let you begin to drink and eat.

Nurses give you medicine to help take some of your hurt away. You need to tell your nurse if it hurts. They will also help you get out of bed, go to the bathroom, and answer your questions. If your nurse is not in your room when you need something, there is a button on your bed to push for your nurse to come.

You may have a bandage where you had your operation. It might be on your head, face, arm, leg, back or tummy.



GETTING BETTER

Other ways to feel better.

It is important to take the medicine your doctor orders for you so that you will begin to feel better and have less pain. Besides taking medicine, there are also many other ways to make your body feel better. Here are a few ideas you may want to try with the help of your Mom, Dad, hospital caregiver or other adult in your family:

Slow and deep breaths –Take a deep breath in and slowly blow the pain out and away from your body.

Getting your mind off your discomfort –Doing fun things like playing video games, reading a book, listening to music, or making craft projects to keep yourself busy and not thinking about the pain.

Imagination — Think fun and special thoughts about places you feel happiest, and pretend you are there. Use your mind and think about the things you are seeing, touching and tasting.

Touch — Have someone that you care about gently rock you, cuddle you or rub your head. Hold a soft pillow or blanket over your area of pain. Sometimes if you put something cold or warm where you are having pain, it will help make you feel better. Before putting anything on the spot where you had your operation, be sure you check with your nurse or doctor.



You may need the help of other hospital workers like the physical therapist, who teaches you how to walk with crutches and to do exercises...
 the dietitian, who helps you pick out healthy foods so your body will heal faster and get stronger...
 the social worker, who spends time with you and your family to offer support and comfort..
 the psychiatrist, who talks to you and your family about your feelings and worries.....
 and many,

many,
 more!!



If you spend the night and are feeling better, there is a playroom that you may want to visit. The playroom is a fun place, where you can go to play and meet other kids. The playroom will have games, books, puzzles, movies, arts and crafts, cooking activities and other fun things for you to do.

"WHO TAKES CARE OF ME WHILE I'M IN THE HOSPITAL?"

Write or circle who took care of you!

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Nurse | Doctor |
| Chaplain | Radiologist |
| Dietician | Psychiatrist |
| Speech Therapist | Physical Therapist |
| Occupational Therapist | Social Worker |
| Secretary | Child Life Specialist |



"TIME OUT FOR ME"



There you will meet a Child Life Specialist who can help you learn more about the hospital and how your body works. This person uses special dolls and medical equipment that can help you talk about what ever you want so that you feel more comfortable.

A Special Note To Parents/Guardians.....

Preparing a child for surgery and hospitalization is a great challenge. Experiencing the whole hospitalization process and caring for a sick child can be overwhelming and exhausting. Our “Operation Day” storybook is one way to gently introduce and comfort you and your child about the many unfamiliar words, people, and equipment of the surgical process.

The old saying “honesty is the best policy” holds true when preparing for surgery. It is important to always be honest with your child. Medical tests, personnel and anesthesia can be very frightening. Your child may lose trust if things are not explained openly and honestly.

Here are a few hints to help you:

..Let your child know what will hurt and what won't. Explain that things that hurt or are uncomfortable have to be done to help him or her get better.

..Let your child know when you have to leave the hospital and when you will return. Although it seems like a good idea, don't sneak out while your child is asleep without telling him or her. If your child is young and has no concept of time, you can use a reference such as a meal time or television show. For example, “I'll be back after you eat dinner tonight”, or “I'll be back when Sesame Street is over”. You may also wish to leave a personal belonging with your child. Children find comfort in familiar objects and will feel better knowing you will return to get your personal item.

..If you can not return when promised, call your child and/or the nursing staff to let them know. To prepare themselves for hospitalization with their child, some parents stock up on groceries, cook and freeze meals for the rest of the family, make sure their bills are paid, and setup homework help, carpools and extra child care for brothers and sisters. Many brothers and sisters feel left out or worry that they caused their sibling to have to go to the hospital. It is very important to prepare brothers and sisters for the changes that will happen with their routines, reassure them that the illness is nobody's fault, and plan “special time” with them before, during and after the hospital stay. You can tell them that they can come and visit their brother or sister when they are feeling better!

“Waiting” to receive information about your child's condition from the surgeon can be one of the most stressful times of your life. Five minutes can seem like an hour! We understand this time of anxiety and try to provide you with as much information as possible to keep you abreast of where and how your child is. We suggest you bring a book, magazine, or something to do in order to make the time pass more quickly.

Our hospital has a “Family Waiting Area” where you receive information about your child's condition from the surgeon. It is important to remember that once your child is out of surgery, the “waiting” seems even longer. When your child is in the PACU/Recovery Room they are getting very special care. We want you to be with them as soon as possible but realize the recovery room can be a very busy place because there are many patients coming out of surgery. The nurses will make arrangements for you to see your child.

You may notice some behavior changes in your child before, during and after their stay in the hospital. Many children regress by acting younger than their age. They may suck their thumb, wet the bed, or talk in “baby talk”. Others may cling to you more than usual and will not separate from you as easily as they have in the past. These are common reactions to hospitalization and usually disappear with time.

During these regressive periods and throughout your child's hospital experience, it is comforting for your child to know that you understand their feelings. However, even though you acknowledge your child's anger, frustrations and regressive behavior, it is important to continue to provide age appropriate activities and remain consistent with your family's regular routine and behavioral guidelines.



Special thanks to the many people and services that helped make this possible.

- Ladies Visiting Committee
- Customer Services Department
- Department of Patient Care Services
- Nappi Creative
- All the children and families who shared their surgical experiences with us.