Paediatric nurse-led pre-assessment clinic

This leaflet offers information about the pre-assessment clinics held at Evelina Children’s Hospital and what to expect when you and your child attend one.

What is a pre-assessment clinic?

This is an outpatient appointment where you will be able to discuss your child’s planned operation, test or procedure with the team before your child is admitted to hospital. Your child will also have various tests and investigations carried out during this appointment. This avoids any delays on the day of the operation, test or procedure, and reduces the risk of cancellation.

The results of any tests and investigations are available in plenty of time and can also be re-checked if they are not within the normal range.

The appointment is also useful if your child is worried about any aspect of the hospital stay. Our play specialists and other members of the team can help to prepare your child for coming into hospital. We can also start making plans for after the operation, so that if you need any equipment or supplies, these can be arranged beforehand.

Another benefit of the clinic is that your child may be able to be admitted on the day of the operation, test or procedure, rather than the night before. However, if your child needs special preparation, like bowel preparation, he or she may still need to come into hospital the day before.

Who can attend/receive the service?

All children referred by their consultant for an operation, test or procedure which involves a general anaesthetic are eligible for this service.

Where do I need to go?

Pre-assessment takes place in the Evelina Children’s Hospital, mainly on the 1st floor (Arctic) in the pre-assessment rooms (wait in the Walrus waiting area) or Ocean outpatients (ground floor). Your letter will specify where you need to go.

Does it cost anything?

Evelina Children’s Hospital is within the Congestion Charging zone. The car park is ‘pay-on-foot’ and has limited spaces. Please make sure that you have the correct change. You should pay at the machine before you return to your car so that you have an exit ticket. Charges are displayed at the entrance. There are also allocated spaces for registered disabled drivers.
There is additional parking available on Upper Marsh, however, because this is not a hospital-run car park, charges may differ.

**Who can I contact for more information?**
Your letter will advise you who to call if you have any problems or if you need to change/cancel your appointment. Alternatively, you can ring the switchboard between the hours of 9am and 5pm and ask them to bleep 0385 (lead nurse for pre-assessment) or ring extension 53422.

**What do I need to bring with me?**
Please bring your letter with you and any medication your child is currently taking. Also your child’s red book is very helpful as it contains useful information with regards to immunisation, weight and height.

**What will the appointment involve?**
The specialist nurse and/or healthcare assistant will meet you and your child and will take down your child’s medical history and any other information needed before your child is admitted to hospital. The nurse will offer information about any care your child will need before and after the operation.

Because all children are seen by the anaesthetist on the day of surgery, the nurse will also explain the types of anaesthesia that are used at the hospital and about options for pain relief after the operation, test or procedure.

Please allow at least 1–2 hours for your appointment as your child may need additional tests. There may be the opportunity to visit the ward after your child’s appointment – please ask the nurse to arrange this for when you arrive.

**What tests and investigations may my child need?**

**Blood tests**
Your child may need various blood tests before the operation, test or procedure. However many children will not need any blood tests. This depends on your child’s medical condition and the nature of the surgery that is planned. The particular blood tests used before an operation, test or procedure include:

- **FBC (full blood count)** – to check whether your child has a low number of red blood cells (anaemia).
- **U&Es (urea and electrolytes)** – to check that your child’s kidneys are working properly.
- **Clotting** – to check how long it takes for your child’s blood to form a clot.
- **G&S (group and save)** – to check your child’s blood group in case he or she needs a blood transfusion.
- **Cross match** – to ensure that if your child needs a blood transfusion during surgery it is available on the day.
- **LFTs (liver function tests)** – to check that your child’s liver is working properly.
- **Sickle cell test** – to check whether your child has sickle cell disease or trait. This only applies when your child’s ethnic origin indicates that he or she is more likely to have sickle cell disease or trait.
Other investigations
Your child will need to have a nose, axilla (underarm) and groin swab. This is routine and checks for certain infections.

Your child will need their blood pressure, pulse, temperature and oxygen level recorded, along with their weight and height. This may be done by the healthcare assistant or nurse.

If your child needs any other tests or investigations like ECHO, ECG, hearing tests, ultrasound, x-rays or photographs, we will arrange these for when you attend the pre-assessment clinic if possible. Otherwise, we will arrange this for another time prior to the day your child comes into hospital.

Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns about pre-assessment clinic, please contact the lead nurse for pre-assessment. To do this, call the hospital switchboard on 020 7188 7188 and ask for the bleep desk. Ask for bleep 0385 and wait for a response. This will connect you directly to the lead nurse.

Further sources of information
Pharmacy medicines helpline
For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas’ hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
\[t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday\]

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust’s services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:
\[t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas’ \quad t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy’s \quad e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk\]

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)
For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas’ Hospital.
\[t: 020 7188 3416\]

Language support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.
\[t: 020 7188 8815 \quad fax: 020 7188 5953\]

NHS Choices
Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.
\[w: www.nhs.uk\]