

Pain management for your child

At the Evelina London Children's Hospital, we aim to ensure your child is as comfortable as possible after their operation.

A multidisciplinary pain team including anaesthetic doctors, ward nurses and doctors, pharmacists and a clinical nurse specialist will all be involved in controlling your child's pain.

This booklet explains some of the ways in which pain can be prevented or treated while your child is in hospital.

Why will my child need pain medicine?

Surgery may result in some pain or discomfort in the post-operative period.

Various types of pain medicine (analgesics) are available to control this. Pain relief will be tailored to your child's needs so that he or she is comfortable at all stages following surgery.

What pain medicines should my child have?

After a minor operation, simple analgesics such as paracetamol can be very effective in providing pain relief.

Drugs such as ibuprofen or diclofenac may also be used, however these drugs may not be suitable for some patients who have asthma or kidney disease. After major surgery, morphine may be prescribed. This can be given by various routes including by mouth, by a single injection, or by a 'drip' (a continuous intravenous infusion).

Local anaesthetic drugs are also used to provide pain relief. These are usually given immediately before or during an operation whilst your child is under general anaesthesia. They can be used in various ways such as via epidural infusion, caudal injection (at the base of the spine), paravertebral block (involving an injection of local anaesthetic around the nerves coming out of the spine), or by local injection to numb individual nerves.

The anaesthetic doctor will discuss local anaesthetic techniques with you before surgery if they are appropriate for your child.

How will the medicine be given?

There are three main ways medicines can be taken: orally (by mouth), in the form of liquids or tablets; rectally, in the form of suppositories; or intravenously, directly into the bloodstream via a cannula which is placed within a vein.

Can pain medicines be combined?

Yes, we often do this to provide extra pain relief. Please note medicines must **only** be given by medical or nursing staff while your child is in hospital.

What happens when my child leaves hospital?

Your child may need to continue with some pain relief medicine for a short while after they leave hospital. You may be given a prescription which you can collect from the hospital pharmacy before you leave. If your child experiences continued discomfort despite this medicine, please call the ward for advice or contact your GP.

Please refer to the separate leaflet entitled **Specialised pain relief methods for your child** for further information.

Contact us

Please call the hospital switchboard, **t:** 020 7188 7188, and then enter the extension for the relevant ward.

Mountain Ward, ext. 88852

Savannah Ward, ext. 88848

Beach Ward, ext. 88844

Arctic Day Surgery Unit, ext. 84670

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm

e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

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