

Your baby's operation

This leaflet explains about what happens when your baby needs an operation. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask the doctor or nurse caring for your baby.

Consent – asking for your consent

The neonatologist (baby doctor) and surgeon will talk to you about the need for an operation. The surgeon who will be doing your baby's operation will explain to you what the operation involves, the intended benefits, and what the risks are of having the operation.

He/she will discuss any extra procedures that may become necessary during the operation, including the possible need for a blood transfusion. The surgeon will ask you to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to your baby having the operation.

Further information about giving permission for your baby's treatment is available in the Trust's leaflet **Consent to treatment for your child**. If you do not have a copy, please ask your doctor or nurse for a copy.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

What is a general anaesthetic?

General anaesthetic is medicine that is used to make sure the baby is asleep and does not feel any pain during an operation. Specially trained doctors, called anaesthetists, care for all patients having an anaesthetic. All babies having an operation will be cared for by specialised paediatric (children's) anaesthetists who have been specially trained to give anaesthetics to children.

Before the operation the anaesthetist will see your baby and will talk to you about the anaesthetic technique. Occasionally, the anaesthetist may decide to delay your baby's operation if they feel that it would be safer for your baby to do so. If this happens, they will give you a full explanation.

Further information regarding anaesthesia is available in the leaflet **Your child's general anaesthetic**.

Operation timing

You will be told the date of the operation and potential time. However, the actual time of the operation may change at short notice, and sometimes the operation may have to be cancelled. This can be for a variety of reasons, and may be because another child needs an emergency operation at that time. If the operation is cancelled, a full explanation will be given to you and a new date set for your baby's operation.

Preparing your baby before the operation

It is important that your baby's stomach is empty for the operation. This lessens the risk of your baby being sick while unconscious, which could lead to complications.

Breastfed babies

You can breastfeed your baby up to four hours before the operation. The nurse will let you know what time this is.

Babies having formula milk

You can give your baby formula milk up to six hours before the operation. The nurse will let you know what time this is.

Whilst your baby is not being fed, we will stop him or her getting dehydrated with liquid through a cannula (small tube) into a vein (also known as a 'drip'). A second cannula may also be put into another vein. This allows the anaesthetist to give the anaesthetic as well as any other necessary medicines.

On the morning of the day of the operation, your baby will be given a wash with a special lotion (Octenisan®), and dressed in a clean gown with clean cot linen. This wash is to ensure the skin is thoroughly cleansed, reducing the amount of bacteria normally found there, and consequently reducing the risk of developing infection.

The nurse caring for your baby will complete a checklist to ensure that your baby is fully prepared for the operation, and that any other relevant information is available.

Transfer to the operating theatre

The operating theatres are in the Evelina Children's Hospital (here at St Thomas'). Your baby will be taken there in a transport incubator. This is an incubator that is specially designed for moving babies around. A doctor, nurse and porter will accompany your baby and usually you will be able to go with them. Sometimes we can take the baby to the theatre in a cot or pram.

Your baby will be taken first into the anaesthetic room, which is next to the operating theatre. There, you will meet a member of the theatre staff who, (with your baby's nurse), will check your baby's details with the checklist. The nurse will then take you back to the Neonatal Unit where you can wait for your baby to come back.

What happens after the operation?

Depending on the type of operation your baby has had, they may be taken to the recovery room (near the operating theatre) before coming back to the Neonatal Unit. Here, specially trained recovery nurses will monitor your baby until they wakes up.

Your baby will be collected from the operating theatre by a nurse, doctor and porter, and will be transported in the transport incubator. We will let you know when we are going to collect your baby so that you can be on the Neonatal Unit when your baby arrives back.

After the operation, the surgeon who has operated on your baby will explain to you what they did in the operation. Either they will come and speak to you on the Neonatal Unit, or they will phone you.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the neonatal unit on **020 7188 4045**. Your call can then be directed to the right area.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit 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 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday **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

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

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

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Leaflet number: 4516/VER1

Date published: December 2017

Review date: December 2020

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A list of sources is available on request