

Frequently asked questions

Your child's admission to hospital

Who do I contact if my child is unwell before their admission?

If your child is unwell and develops a fever, cough, rash, coloured mucous (snot), diarrhoea or vomiting within seven days before their operation, or if your child has been in direct contact with someone with chickenpox, measles, mumps or scarlet fever within 14 days before their operation, please call the pre-assessment clinic to let us know. Call the hospital switchboard on **t: 020 7188 7188**, and enter extension 56222, 56223, or 56224 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).

If your child becomes unwell any time after 5pm on the evening before their admission, you will need to cancel their admission. Call **t: 020 7188 7188** and ask for the bleep desk. Ask for bleep 0821 and wait for a response.

What to do if I want to cancel my child's operation?

If you cannot make the date you have been given for the operation, please contact the admissions team on **t: 020 7188 9098** (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm). Please let us know as soon as possible so that we can offer the appointment to another child on the waiting list and rearrange your child's operation.

What will happen on the day we come in to hospital?

You and your child will be welcomed onto the ward by one of our nurses who will take you to your child's allocated bed area and will help you settle your child. Members of the medical team including your child's surgeon and anaesthetist will meet with you on the ward. This is needed so the team can check that your child is well enough for their operation or planned test and answer any other questions you may have.

For further information, please visit **w: www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/operations**.

What time does my child need to stop eating or drinking on the day of their surgery or planned procedure?

Each child has a specific 'nil by mouth' instruction. This means they will be given a time by which they need to stop eating and drinking on the day of their surgery or planned procedure. The time for your child to stop eating and drinking will be clearly written on your child's admission appointment letter.

Here is an example of what to expect.

If your child has a 7.30am admission, your child can have:

- food until 2am – nothing to eat after this time
- breast milk until 4am – no breast milk after this time
- please note that food includes milk (including formula), thickener, carbonated (fizzy) drinks, sweets and chewing gum
- please give your child a drink of water at 6am
- nothing to drink after 7am.

If your child has an 11.30am admission, your child can have:

- an early breakfast before 7am – nothing to eat after this time
- breast milk until 9am – no breast milk after this time
- please note that food includes milk (including formula), thickener, carbonated (fizzy) drinks, sweets and chewing gum
- please give your child a drink of water at 11am
- nothing to drink after 12 midday.

At what time will my child have their surgery or planned procedure?

You will be told an approximate time for the surgery or procedure during your meeting with the medical team on the day you arrive at the hospital.

Will I be able to go with my child to the anaesthetic room?

You are able to go with your child to the anaesthetic room. Once your child is asleep you will be asked to leave before your child goes into theatre. After your child's surgery or planned procedure they will be transferred to the recovery room where they will be taken care of by nursing staff until they wake up. The nurses will call you once your child begins to wake up.

Where can I wait while my child has their surgery or planned procedure?

You are welcome to wait at your child's allocated bed on the ward or to use the cafés and restaurants at Evelina London or St Thomas' Hospital. In Evelina London, there are two cafés (ground floor and third floor) where you can purchase hot and cold drinks and refreshments. There are further restaurants and shops located within St Thomas'. There are parents' rooms located on each of the wards which you are also welcome to use. The parents' room has facilities for making hot drinks and microwaveable food.

If you leave the ward please make sure that you have given your mobile phone number to the nurse who is looking after your child. We can then contact you as soon as your child wakes up and take you to them.

What items can or should I bring with me to the hospital?

You may bring activities for your child to play with during the waiting time. This will help to distract them while they are waiting for their surgery or planned procedure. Some parents find it useful to bring familiar items or favourite toys which their child can have when they are in the recovery room after their surgery or planned procedure. Please note there are also playing facilities within the hospital and toys on each of the wards.

Occasionally children who are having day surgery may need to stay overnight, so you may wish to bring an overnight bag (such as change of clothes and toiletries) with you just in case.

Can I bring food with me into the hospital?

We provide food for your child when they are able to eat after their procedure. However, you are welcome to bring your child's favourite food with you which they can have once they are allowed to eat again. There are microwaves located in the parents' room on each ward which can be used to heat your child's food. Please be aware that access to these may be limited due to there being only one microwave on each ward.

Can my child have vaccinations before their surgery or planned procedure?

We advise not to have vaccinations a week before or a week after your child's surgery or planned procedure.

Can I stay overnight at the hospital while my child is an inpatient?

If your child has to stay overnight, one parent may stay with them. Siblings are not allowed to stay overnight at the hospital. If your child is being looked after in the paediatric intensive care unit or high dependency unit, you will not be allowed to sleep at their bedside, however other arrangements will be made for you. The nurse in charge will discuss this with you on the day.

Can I bring my child's brothers or sisters to the hospital on the day of my child's surgery or planned procedure?

We do not recommend that you bring your child's brothers or sisters to the hospital. You should make arrangements for other children to be looked after and to be picked up from school.

When my child is discharged, can I bring my child home on public transport?

You should expect to stay in the hospital for at least four hours after your child's surgery or planned procedure. We do not recommend that you travel home with your child on public transport but that you travel home by car or taxi if possible.

Where can I park?

There is limited parking at both Evelina London and St Thomas'. There is a car park located at St Thomas', on the lower ground level. There is an hourly charge which applies 24 hours a day. There is a small area of parking for blue badge holders only located outside the Evelina London. There are also reserved blue badge holder bays within the car park at St Thomas'. If you are a blue badge holder you may be able to get your parking for free. To do this you need to go to the Knowledge and Information Centre (KIC) on the ground floor of North Wing with your appointment letter, blue badge and car park entry ticket.

Please note that Evelina London and St Thomas' are within the Congestion Charge zone.

Will my child have a follow-up appointment and when will that be?

Your child may be offered a follow-up appointment after their surgery or planned procedure. You will be told if your child requires a follow-up appointment before they are discharged.

Where can I find more information about my child's admission for surgery or planned procedure?

When you are sent the appointment letter for your child's admission date it will also include an information leaflet called **Admission information for operation or planned tests**.

More information about your child's admission can be found on Evelina London's website, including a video about coming into hospital.

Please visit [w: www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/operations](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/operations).

Top tips for parents, from parents

'Bring in lots of activities for your child to use while in hospital. I brought in a few items for my child but I wish I had brought in more!'

'There is a parent's room on the ward in which you have some parents' space and which has coffee-making facilities!'

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your admission, please contact the pre-assessment clinic on **t:** 020 7188 7188, extension 56222, 56223 or 56224, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

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

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 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

w: www.nhs.uk

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 4433/VER2

Date published: March 2019

Review date: March 2022

© 2019 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
A list of sources is available on request