

Your baby's operation

This leaflet explains what happens when your baby needs surgery. If you have any more questions or concerns, please speak to the doctor or nurse caring for your baby.

Asking for your permission (consent)

The neonatologist (baby doctor) and surgeon will talk to you about why your baby needs to have surgery. The surgeon who will be doing your baby's operation will explain to you what it involves, the intended benefits, and any risks.

They'll discuss any extra procedures that may become necessary during surgery, including the possible need for a blood transfusion. If you agree for the surgery to go ahead, the surgeon will ask you to sign a consent form. This states that you understand what the procedure involves and agree that you want your baby can have it.

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

General anaesthetic

A general anaesthetic makes sure the patient is asleep and does not feel any pain during surgery. Anaesthetists, care for all patients having an anaesthetic. All babies having surgery will be cared for by paediatric (children's) anaesthetist.

Before surgery, the anaesthetist will see your baby, and talk to you about the anaesthetic technique. If the anaesthetist feels it would be safer for your baby, they might decide to delay the surgery. If this happens, they will fully explain the reasons to you.

More information about anaesthesia is available in our leaflet, **Your child's general anaesthetic**.

Timing of surgery

You'll be told the date of the operation and potential time. The actual time of the surgery might change at short notice, and sometimes operations have to be cancelled. This can be for different reasons, and might be because another child needs more urgent surgery at that time. If your baby's surgery is cancelled, we'll explain the reasons to you, and give you a new date for the surgery.

Preparing your baby for surgery

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

Breastfed babies

You can breastfeed your baby up to 4 hours before surgery. The nurse looking after your baby will tell you what time that is.

Babies having formula milk

You can give your baby formula-milk up to 6 hours before surgery. The nurse looking after your baby will tell you what time that is.

While your baby is not being fed, we'll stop them getting dehydrated by giving them fluid through a small tube (cannula) into a vein. A second cannula may also be put in to allow the anaesthetist to give any medicines.

On the day of surgery your baby will have a special cream applied into their nose, and be given a wash with a special lotion (Octenisan®). The cream and wash are to make sure the skin is thoroughly cleansed, to reduce the number of bacteria, and reducing the risk of infection.

The nurse caring for your baby will complete a checklist to make sure that your baby is fully prepared for surgery, and that any other relevant information is available.

Transfer to the operating theatre

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

Your baby will be taken into the anaesthetic room, which is next to the operating theatre. You'll 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 after surgery.

After the operation

Depending on the type of surgery your baby's had, they might be taken to the recovery room (near the operating theatre) before coming back to the neonatal unit. Specially trained recovery nurses will monitor your baby until they wake up.

Your baby will be collected from the operating theatre by a nurse, doctor and porter. We'll let you know when we go to collect your baby, so that you can be on the neonatal unit for when they arrive.

After the surgery, the surgeon will explain to you what happened. They'll 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, **phone:** 020 7188 4045 and your call can then be directed to the right area.

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

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