Paediatric information

Admission for children’s day-case surgery: advice for parents

Coming into hospital can be an anxious time for you and your child. We hope that this leaflet will help you to know what to expect. Please feel free to ask us for advice and explanation.

What is day case surgery?
Day case surgery is where a patient is admitted, has their operation and is discharged on the same day. This will usually mean a full day spent in the hospital – for example, from 7.30am to 6.00pm. Children are unable to stay overnight in Moorfields Eye Hospital.

Preparing in advance for admission
At the end of your clinic appointment, once a date has been agreed for your child’s operation, the nurse will do a pre-operative assessment. He or she will give you and your child information about what will happen on the ward and will answer any questions that you have. You will also be advised about fasting instructions (when to stop eating and drinking) before the surgery.

If you are unable to come to the ward for a face to face pre-operative assessment, please phone the ward on 020 7566 2595 and a nurse can ask the necessary questions and give fasting advice over the phone. It is unlikely that you will need to come to the hospital for this check.

If your child has any changes to their general health or becomes ill with a cold, cough, chest infection or disease such as chickenpox before their admission, please phone the ward for advice on 020 7566 2595. We advise you to phone between 10am and 5pm, Monday-Friday for non-urgent advice or from 7.30am if it is urgent. The ward is not open at night or on bank holidays.
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A few days before admission, it is important for you to explain to your child – simply and truthfully – what will happen. Explanations are always limited, of course, by the individual child’s level of understanding. Brothers and sisters are important too, so please include them; depending on their age, they might well be a help.

When talking with your child, you could give a brief, simple explanation using phrases such as “special sleep” for anaesthetic. Your child could be told that when the special sleep is over, the eye will feel a little uncomfortable and sore, but that the discomfort will not last very long because their eye has been made better. It is often a good idea to let your child set the pace and for you to answer honestly within your child’s own understanding.

Also tell them about the doctors who sometimes wear coloured theatre clothes with special paper hats and nurses with different coloured tops. Explain that they are there to help people to get better. It is always advisable to answer questions as truthfully as you can and we will too. We also know that this is something that is easier said than done.

Your child will not be allowed to eat or drink for some time before the surgery – if he or she does, the anaesthetic will have to be cancelled because of the risk of dangerous consequences, particularly the inhalation of food from the stomach while under the anaesthetic. Please ensure that you follow the fasting instructions given by the nurse or doctor.

What to bring

Please bring all medication that your child is taking with you. We supply brightly coloured theatre gowns for children to wear during the operation, but if your child prefers to wear their own pyjamas/nightie and dressing gown, please bring these as well. The pyjamas and nighties must be cotton with no metal poppers or studs.

Make sure you bring your child’s favourite toy or cuddly blanket—even if it is old or worn! Remember to mark them with your child’s name as the hospital cannot accept responsibility for lost clothes and other belongings.

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If your baby takes formula milk, please bring this with you already prepared.

If your child has special dietary needs
such as kosher, gluten-free or purees, please bring appropriate snacks with you and discuss this with the nurse who admits your child. Please be aware that we are unable to cook or reheat any food or store food for patients or their families in a fridge.

Baby feeds will be warmed in a jug of hot water, not in a microwave.

There is a small cafe open from 9am-4pm where you can buy hot and cold drinks and snacks for yourself. Your child will be given snacks and a drink when they have recovered from the anaesthetic on the ward.

Please check with the nurses before giving drinks and food to your child after their return to the ward and please remember that other children could be waiting for surgery and not permitted to eat or drink. Please do not share food or drinks with other children.

Please do not bring electrical appliances that require plugging into an electrical socket. We are happy for you to bring laptops or games powered by batteries, but please be aware that these items will be your responsibility and in your safekeeping.

On the day

Your child must be accompanied by mother, father or guardian with legal parental responsibility. We need to know if a family member has an infection as this is could affect your child’s anaesthetic or surgery.

Please arrive on the ward at the time stated in your admission letter. Each child is individually assessed and admitted while accompanied by their parent/guardian. You and your child will meet the surgeon who will discuss the operation and obtain your consent. You will also meet the anaesthetist who will explain the type of anaesthetic and pain relief that your child is going to be given. Parents sometimes forget about something they mean to ask, so please do not hesitate to ask questions later. The nurses will be happy to answer any questions.

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You will need to remain with your child on the ward throughout their preparation for surgery and also their recovery after the operation.

For your child’s safety, we require that side frames are left up on beds.
and cots at all times when the child is there. Your child will remain on the ward until they have recovered from the anaesthetic and surgery. Children must be able to drink water or squash without being sick before they are discharged from the ward and snacks such as sandwiches, fruit, yoghurts and ice creams are also provided by the ward staff. If your child is uncomfortable after their operation, the nurses will provide appropriate pain relief while he/she is on the ward.

There is a playroom staffed by a play specialist who supplies Wii games, children’s DVDs, toys and books and often provides other activities such as painting and drawing as well. Older children usually prefer to bring their own books into hospital.

**Going home**

Adequate travelling arrangements should be made prior to admission. Please avoid using the tube to travel home with your child after their surgery.

It is advisable to arrange for brothers and sisters to be collected from school or nursery by a friend or relative. We are unable to predict your child’s exact time of discharge as children differ in their recovery from anaesthetics.

When your child is able to go home, the nurse will give you information about his/her care and an emergency telephone number. You will also be given a supply of any medication required and advice about your child’s follow up in the outpatient clinic.

On the first working day following your child’s operation, a ward nurse will phone to check whether you have any problems and to give advice if needed.

Please ensure that you have a supply of paracetamol/calpol appropriate for your child’s age in case your child is uncomfortable after discharge.

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Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

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**Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)**

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325
Email: pals@moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields’ PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

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**Your right to treatment within 18 weeks**

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.