



Things to Think About!



By Brandan Atkin

Worried about what to do before you even go in for surgery? Don't worry, we are here to help.

To learn more about how to prepare yourself, visit www.stronghealth.com/services/childrens/aboutus/hospitalstayprepareyourself.cfm

To learn more about how to prepare your child, visit www.stronghealth.com/services/childrens/aboutus/hospitalstayprepareyourchild.cfm

Both services are provided by Golisano Children's Hospital.

If there is anything that you would like to see discussed in our newsletter or on the website please e-mail us at snrproject@hotmail.com

After Outpatient Surgery By Linda Jorgensen

Let's face it. Children with complicated illnesses and medical conditions spend a lot of time in outpatient departments of local hospitals. Complicated lab tests, small procedures or even outpatient surgery are all reasons parents sit in waiting rooms waiting to take a less than happy child home. Over the years we've had our fair share of family outpatient procedures and, through trial and upchucking, have learned a few things.

Outpatient surgery is no picnic. Being prepared for the procedure beforehand, touring the hospital, asking questions and visiting with Child Life Specialists are all things to do *before* the procedure, which can make the procedure and your short hospital stay friendlier. But what happens when you go home?

Hopefully, before you leave the hospital, you've gotten instructions about your child's care from the nursing staff. It's a long list! A typical list could include any, or all, of the following, and then some. Things such as how to care for casts, surgical dressings, medications, side effects of those medications, what to do for pain relief, signs and symptoms of a possible infection, who to call with questions or problems, what level of activity is allowed, diet restrictions, what to expect over the next 24-48 hours, etc. It's enough to make a parent crazy!

Here is a list of our favorite comfort tips, for both parents and child, to make recuperation easier for the entire family once you leave the hospital for home.

Before the procedure:

- Arrange for some time off or for a more flexible schedule at work.
- Line up people you trust to stay with your other children when needed.

- Line up family or friends who can help you with carpools, soccer practices, or other errands.
- Find out before hand what specific foods your child will need. Stock up on Jell-O, soups, drinks, popsicles etc. BEFORE you leave for the hospital.
- Meal plan ahead of time. Prepare extra dishes for the freezer for quick meal preparation. Purchase some family favorite short cuts. Ravioli from a can, canned biscuits and frozen vegetables are a quick meal.
- Use paper plates, cups and plastic utensils for fast clean up after meals.
- Make ice for ice packs or purchase multiple-use ice packs. Freeze before you leave.
- Make sure you have a working thermometer.

On the way home:

- Fill prescriptions at the hospital pharmacy, if possible, before you leave. Saves an extra stop on the way home.
- Carry an "upchuck" bucket in the car. We use an empty dishwasher soap bucket with a tight fitting lid. Lined with two garbage bags this comes in handy for any nausea etc. that may occur on the way home. Simply cover with the lid after use. Toss the garbage bags in the OUTSIDE trashcan when you get home.
- Carry an extra pillow, old towels and a favorite blanket, also for the ride home.
- Don't forget your child's favorite comfort item. Even an 18 year old can appreciate a Teddy Bear to cuddle with on the ride home.

At home:

- Make your child's bed before you leave. Have it ready to slide into when you return home.
- Cover the mattress with a plastic cover, THEN the mattress pad, and the sheet. This will protect the mattress from any leaks or spills. Have an extra mattress pad on hand for linen changes as needed.
- Use old bed pillows and extra pillowcases. Toss old pillows, when soiled, into the trash. This is a great time to rotate family pillows that haven't been changed in a while. Let your child use those until any nausea is past.
- Spend a little one on one time with each of your other children during the day, each day, to ensure they don't feel left out.
- Try to stick to usual family routines.
- **SLEEP WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ASLEEP**, if possible. Make sure you get as much rest as you can.
- **Take breaks from caring for your child periodically.** Trade off tasks with your spouse or with a family member or friend who is willing to give you a break.
- A rested caregiver makes fewer mistakes and a happier household.

Lastly, there is no one right way to care for your child. You, the parent, knows your child best. Trust your instincts and use your resources. With some prior planning and preparation the recuperation process will be easier for everyone. Including Mom and Dad.