

Preparing for your child's Cardiac Surgery

Joe DiMaggio  Children's Hospital

Support from a Child Life Specialist

A child life specialist is a pediatric healthcare professional that helps children and families cope with the challenges of hospitalization. Child life specialists reduce anxiety by providing age-appropriate preparation, education, and coping strategies.

Many parents ask, "how do I explain surgery to my child?" In this packet you will find developmental suggestions to prepare your child for their visit to Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. You will also find a photo prep-book, so that your child can know what to expect on surgery day.

Studies show that children and teenagers who are prepared before hospitalization have less anxiety and fear, an easier time coping with pain, and fewer complications during recovery.

If you or your child would like to consult with a child life specialist prior to your visit, please ask your nurse or call 954-265-0351.

"How Do I Prepare my Child for their Surgery?"

Children need to know:

- 1) that they are coming to the hospital.
- 2) why and when they are coming to the hospital.
- 3) that their surgery is to help their heart.

Infants/Toddlers

- Bring along familiar comfort items from home (i.e. a favorite blanket, stuffed animal, or pacifier.)
- During the period when your child cannot eat, attempt to distract your child by rocking, walking, and comforting him/her.
- Try your best to remain calm (children can sense your stress, which may cause him/her to get upset too.)

Preschoolers

- Talk with your child about 3 days before their visit. Use simple and honest words. (i.e. "sleep medicine" instead of anesthesia.)
- Have your child help pack a few toys and comfort items for their visit.
- Children learn through play. Playing doctor at home can help improve mastery and coping. Explain that going to the hospital is not a punishment for being "bad."

School Age

- Prepare your child around 1 week before their visit. Explain why he/she needs to visit the hospital.
- Be supportive and honest. Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings.
- At this age, kids may be more fearful of pain. Reassure your child that he/she will not feel any pain during the surgery because of their anesthesia/ "sleep medicine."

Teens

- Talk openly about the visit. Teenagers are often uncomfortable admitting they do not understand explanations.
- Include your teen in plans and decisions. Encourage them to make a list of questions and participate in discussions.
- Validate concerns. It's important for teens to know they are allowed to be afraid and to cry. Encourage them to share their feelings with family, friends, and the healthcare team.

Welcome to Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital!



1005 Joe DiMaggio Dr
Hollywood, FL 33021

Entrance



On the day of your heart surgery,
you will start your visit by walking through these doors.

Security



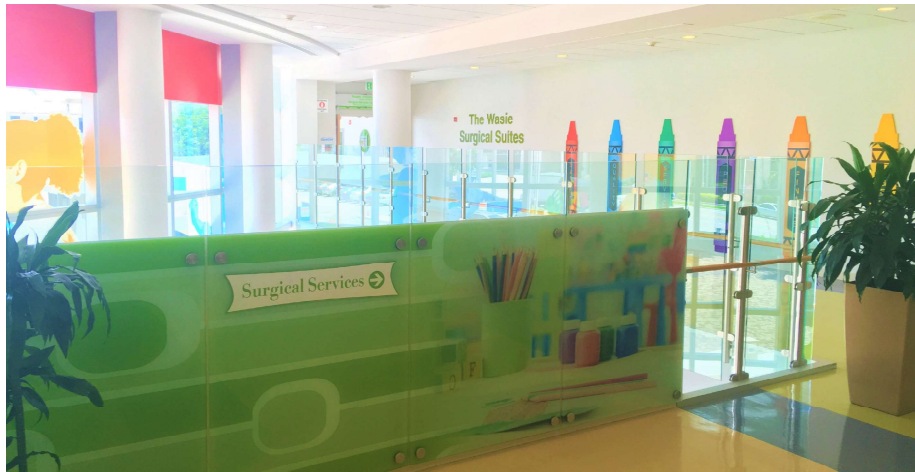
You will stop at security and your family members will be given a sticker name tag to wear.

Elevators



Your family will take an elevator up to the 2nd floor.

2nd Floor



You will walk to Surgical Services for check-in.

Waiting Room



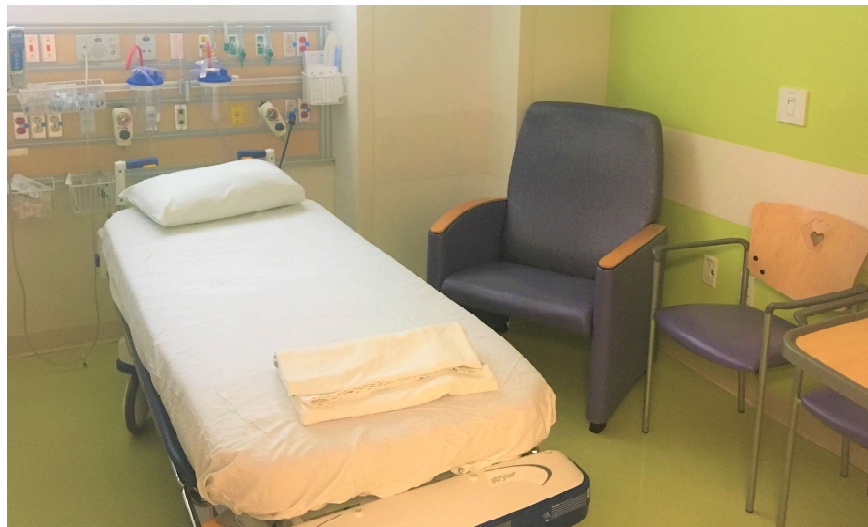
*After checking in, you will wait for your name to be called.
You will be given a bracelet name tag to wear.
It is important to keep the bracelet on the whole time.*

Vitals



The nurse will check your height, weight, and temperature.

Pre-op Room



You will wait in this room to meet your doctors and nurses.

Clothing



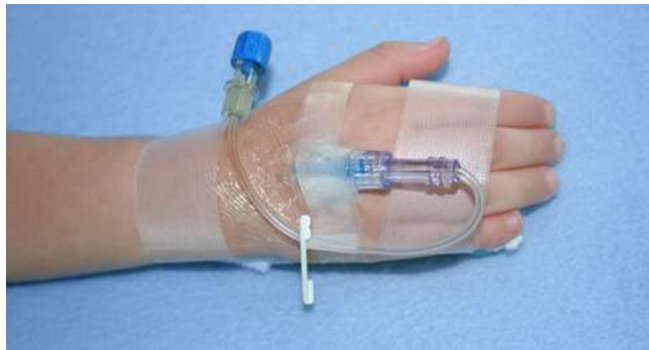
*You will change into a hospital gown.
Some hospital workers wear special clothes too.*

Meeting your Anesthesiologist



The doctor who will be giving you your anesthesia (sleep medicine) will come meet you. Some kids get their sleep medicine through a mask. Others get it through a medicine straw called an IV. Your anesthesiologist will tell you which way you will go to sleep.

IV

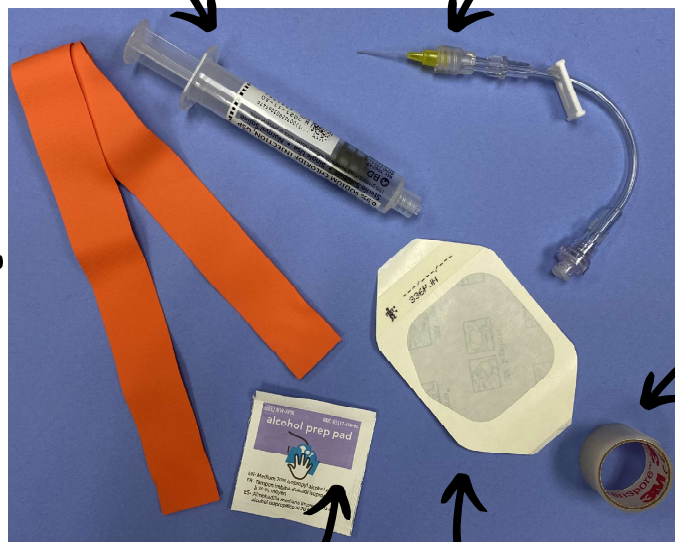


If you need an IV beforehand, it may look like this. IV means "in the vein." Your veins are the blue lines on your hand/arm. You may feel a quick pinch, but once the straw is in the perfect spot, the poke comes out and all that's left is the soft medicine straw.

IV

Water or Medicine

Soft Straw



Stretchy Rubber Band

Tape

Soap

Bandaid

Relaxing Medicine



Some kids may need to drink relaxing medicine before their surgery. We also call it "happy juice" because it may make you feel silly. There are no ouchies!

Sky Bridge



Your hospital bed has wheels. You will get a ride across the Sky Bridge to the OR.

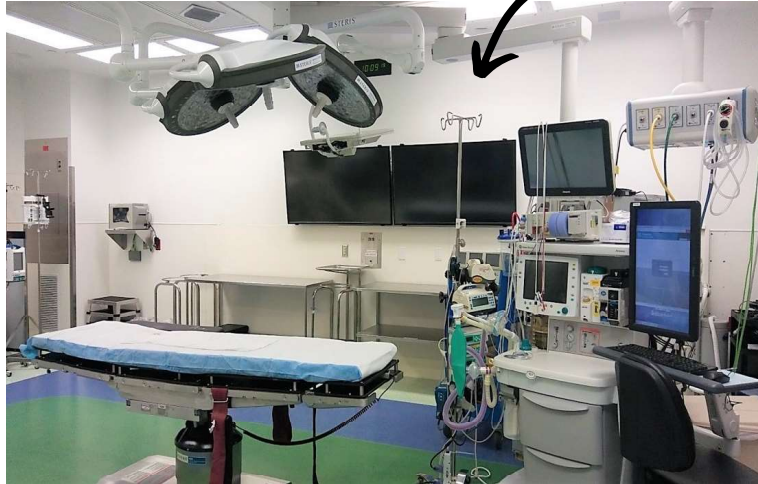
OR

These are lights.

These are T.V.'s
to show pictures
& measurements.

You will lie on a new
bed that will have a
blanket & pillow.

Your sleep
medicine comes
from this
machine.



This is the room where you will get your sleep medicine.

Stickers



Inside the OR, the nurses will put lots of stickers on you.
They may feel a little cold at first, but you will be given
a blanket to keep you warm.

Going to Sleep



Your doctor will give you a special sleep medicine to help you sleep while you have surgery to help your heart. You will not feel anything during the surgery, and you won't wake up until they are all finished!

Overnight Room



You will wake up in a room like this, and will spend a few nights with us at the hospital. A family member will be able to spend the night with you too. Your nurses will check on you and take care of you while you are recovering from surgery.

Waking Up



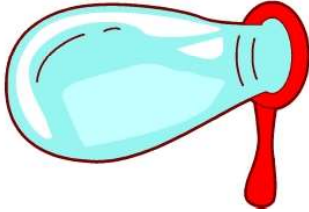
You will wake up with lots of helpers after your surgery. These tubes, wires, and medicine straws all help to make sure that your heart is working well after surgery, and that your body gets the medicine it needs. These helpers will come off before it's time to go home.

Recovering



It is normal to feel some pain and discomfort after surgery. You can help distract your body from noticing the pain by playing with games or toys, watching movies, listening to music, or doing art activities.

Deep Breathing



Deep breathing is really important after surgery.
We can bring you bubbles, a pinwheel, or an incentive spirometer
to help encourage your breathing.

Hooray! You did it!

