

Going into Hospital for an operation

A guide for children aged 7-12

Going to hospital might seem like a scary thing to have to do but it is the best place to go when you are ill or have had an accident.

All the people who work there have been trained to look after you and make you better. That is the most important part of their job.

Why am I going to hospital?

If you have had an accident, you will be taken straight to hospital so that the doctors and nurses can look after you as quickly as possible

If you are not feeling well, you will have been to see your doctor (GP is another name for a doctor). Your doctor may decide that the best thing for you is to go to hospital and will explain why. If you don't understand you should ask them to tell you.

If you have to have an operation (where the doctor needs to fix something inside of you), you will usually have to stay in hospital for a few days and nights. This is because the doctors and nurses will be paying a lot of attention to you and need to check how you are feeling every few hours.

What will happen while I am in hospital?

Your doctor will have explained what is going to happen when you get there and how long you will have to stay, and you can ask the doctor any questions you like. You might want to ask if you can take a favourite toy or your iPod – it's best to find out before you go.

If you are going to have an operation, you will probably meet the surgeon who is in charge of the team who will be taking care of you while you are in the operating room (which is also called a theatre). He/she will explain what they are going to do in the operation and if you have any questions you will be able to ask them. Some people find it useful to write their questions down so they don't forget them when speaking to the doctors, so a pen and paper might be good to have with you.

Where will I stay?



The hospital will try to make sure that where you sleep (the ward) and where you spend your time is with other people of about the same age.

Most hospitals try to make it possible for one of your parents to stay in the hospital while you are there, either in the same room as you or in a bedroom nearby. If this is not possible, they will make arrangements with your parents about coming to see you as often as they can. Your parents will be given a telephone number of someone in the hospital so that they can always ring up and find out how you are, no matter what time it is. And the hospital will have your parents' names and telephone numbers, too.

On the ward it will be the nurses who look after you most of the time. They can be very busy but if you have any questions you should not be afraid to ask. They will explain what happens on the ward like when you will have your meals, where the toilets and bathrooms are, when your parents and friends can come and see you, where you can watch television or listen to your music and make telephone calls, and where you can get a drink. In some hospitals there are certain places you are not allowed to use your mobile or iPod but there will be other places where that will be okay.

What do I need to do?



If you know that there are things you are not allowed to eat or if you have any allergies, or need to use an inhaler, or take pills, you should tell the nurse. They probably know all this information already but it is better to be sure.

After an operation, sometimes you have to eat special food or do special exercises. This is all part of getting better quickly. You need to listen carefully and tell them if you don't understand. It is best if the doctor or nurse tells you about this when your parents are there so they can remember too, especially if you have to keep doing the exercises when you get home.

If you have not been in hospital before, it will seem a weird place. The nurses and other staff will understand if you feel a bit scared or feel a bit miserable at being away from home. All the people who work in a hospital are experts at looking after sick people and they will know how to help you feel better, and how to get better, so that you will be home as soon as possible.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like to find out more you can visit Great Ormond Street Hospital's website at:

www.childrenfirst.nhs.uk