



What you Should Know About your Child's Anesthesia - Hotel Dieu Hospital

Your child has been scheduled for a surgical procedure.

Although this can be an anxious time for you and your child, children and parents accept surgery and anesthesia much better when they are well informed in advance and know what to expect.

Calmly explaining the process of the upcoming surgery will greatly improve your child's experience and help relieve any worries your child may have. The more calm and positive you are, the easier it is for your child to be calm during the time leading up to surgery.

About Anesthesia

- Anesthesia is **very safe**.
- An **anesthesiologist** is a doctor specially trained to provide anesthesia during surgery. This doctor puts your child to sleep and stays with your child throughout the surgery.
- The anesthesiologist constantly watches for any changes in breathing, heart action and blood pressure.
- At the end of the surgery, the anesthesiologist will wake your child and take him/her to the recovery room.
- In the recovery room your child will be cared for by nurses, who will give them pain medicine and other treatment as necessary.

Eating and Drinking the Night Before the Surgery

It is very important that:

- Your child has no solid food after **midnight** on the night before surgery.
- If your child is Breast-fed – encourage breast milk until 4 hours before the surgery.
- If your child is Formula-fed – encourage formula until 6 hours before the surgery.
- All children – encourage clear fluids (such as water or apple juice) until 3 hours before the surgery.

Following these instructions will help maintain good hydration for your child, while keeping his/her anesthesia as safe as possible.

If not strictly followed, your child's surgery may be postponed.

The Day of the Surgery

It can be helpful to bring a personal belonging, such as a favourite Teddy Bear or slippers, so that your child will have a familiar object from home while in the hospital.

Also, if your child is taking any medications please bring them with you to the hospital on the day of surgery.

Please arrive at the hospital on time. Your child will be seen by a nurse who will give your child a hospital bracelet with his/her name. After this, your child can play in the play area until it is time for their surgery.

The Anesthesiologist will talk to you before the surgery and will:

- explain the procedure to you and your child;
- ask you questions about your child's recent health, allergies, or medical conditions such as asthma;
- explain how he/she will begin the anesthetic for your child's surgery.

If your child has the sniffles, a cold, a temperature, or other that could cause problems during the surgery, the surgeon and anesthesiologist may decide to postpone the surgery.

The Anesthesiologist will want to know if your child has had anything to eat. It is important that you followed the fasting instructions about eating and drinking or the surgery may be cancelled.

Sometimes, medication will be given at the beginning of the anesthetic to make your child feel calm. The medication is often in the form of syrup that your child can swallow. It tastes quite good and in 15-20 minutes it will make your child sleepy.

In the Operating Room

- In some cases, you may be able to go with your child to the Operating Room and stay while your child is falling asleep. **The doctor will let you know whether this is possible.** It is important that you leave the room as soon as the doctor indicates that your child is asleep.
- Often a "pilot's mask" (see picture at right) will be placed over your child's nose. Your child will breathe a pleasant smelling gas. It is common for your child to resist the mask, cry, and get upset in the process, but it takes only a few breaths to fall asleep and your child will not remember the experience.
- If an intravenous is placed before your child is asleep, the doctor will often apply some cream to the back of your child's hand about an hour before the surgery begins. To calm any fears your child may have about needles, you can tell your child that this cream will make the needle feel painless or, at worst, like a very tiny 'pinch'.



After the surgery

- The Anesthesiologist will ensure that your child is comfortable while waking up in the Recovery Room.
- Your child may be groggy for several hours after the surgery, although some children are fully alert when they get to the recovery room.
- The most common side effect from general anesthesia is nausea and vomiting.
- You may be able to visit your child in the recovery room soon after he/she arrives there.
- Upon discharge from the recovery room, your child may receive pain medication if ordered by the physician.