

Your child's emergency operation

We understand that being told your child needs an emergency operation is a very stressful time. We hope that by providing the information on this leaflet it may reassure you and answer any questions you may have.

Where will the operation be carried out?

On weekdays (Monday to Friday) emergency surgery for children is normally carried out in the Endoscopy and Day Surgery Unit. This is located at the rear of the hospital behind the Diamond Jubilee Maternity Unit.

At the weekends, and on bank holidays, your child will be asked to attend Bluebell ward (Level 2, Lilac Zone). Please note, the only visitor parking is in the multi-storey car park for which there is a fee payable on exit. The Endoscopy and Day Surgery Unit opens at 7:30am.

Fasting information

To ensure your child's operation is carried out safely, it is important that they have an empty stomach. It is, therefore, **very important** to follow the fasting information below.

If your child is on a morning list (arriving at 7:30am):

- No solid food, drinks containing milk or formula milk after 2:30am.
- No breastmilk after 04:30am.
- Clear fluids until 7:30am, **nothing else after this time.**

If your child is on an afternoon list (arriving at 12:30pm):

- No solid food, drinks containing milk or formula milk after 07:00am.
- No breastmilk after 09:00am.
- Clear fluid until 12:00 noon, **nothing else after this time.**

We know that a lot of parents want to fast with their child, however, in order to be able to look after your child it is important that you are feeling well. Where possible, we would recommend the accompanying parent has something to eat (away from their child) before admission.

What should I bring with me?

- Medications or a list of medications.
- Toys, comforters, electronic devices.
- Comfortable, loose-fitting pyjamas suitable for your child's injury/operation site.

- A spare pair of clothes for your child.
- Food and drink for after your child's operation. Some children will not want to eat much initially so it is useful to pack a sugary drink or bag of sugary sweets.

The day of the operation

On the day of your child's operation, the emergency list will be carried out based on the clinical needs of the patients. Although children are always prioritised, it is not always possible for them to be placed first on the list so there may be some delays. There is a small risk on the day of cancellation. All information will be given to you as soon as possible by the nursing and surgical staff.

On arrival to the unit, you will be greeted by the nursing team. You will also see the surgeon and anaesthetic doctors. You may not see the doctors again after the operation so please ensure you ask all important questions, such as about school and sport at this point.

We know that waiting can be difficult, especially when your child is hungry and tired. To make this as easy as possible you are encouraged to bring familiar items for your child (e.g. tablet, headphones, teddy, comforter, storybooks). There is a small play area on the unit that they are welcome to access.

What about medication?

If your child takes routine medication, please ensure the surgical team are aware when booking them so they can advise whether to carry on taking the medicine before the operation.

If your child has been prescribed antibiotics or needs pain relief, please carry on giving this medication before surgery, it will not affect their operation. Ensure that the nursing and medical teams are aware that they have had this medication.

Your child will not routinely be discharged with medication. Please make sure that you have a good supply of paracetamol (Calpol) and ibuprofen (Nurofen) at home as they may need pain relief over the coming days. If your child's surgeon feels that they need stronger painkillers, this will be provided.

Visiting information

Please ensure that the accompanying adult has legal parental responsibility for the patient.

We are able to have two consistent adults by the bedside of each patient, although there may be some circumstances on the ward when we may ask one adult to wait in the waiting area.

Please be aware we cannot have any other relatives or siblings waiting in the department.

After the operation

When your child's operation is complete, they will be taken to the recovery area where they will be closely monitored. Once they are awake you will be invited to recovery to meet them and accompany them back to the ward. We will monitor them until they are ready for discharge.

Depending on your child's operation and recovery this could be as little as an hour and a half, or a couple of hours. Rarely, your child may need overnight admission to Bluebell ward.

Your child is not able to go home on public transport following an operation so please make sure you have transport planned.

We have limited food options on the ward. We would advise bringing a packed lunch for your child for after their operation as we like to see that they are eating and drinking before discharge.

It is not uncommon for a child to have nausea and vomiting after an operation. Do not worry if your child vomits once or twice after leaving the hospital. If this occurs, stop giving food for about an hour and try small amounts of water every 20 minutes and then move onto a light diet.

Your child will require at least 24 hours rest at home with adult supervision following their operation, please ensure their school is aware of this. Surgeons may advise if their operation requires a longer recovery time.

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Children's Day Surgery, Level 4

- Telephone 01438 285775

Bluebell Ward

- Telephone 01438 284008

Plastics Dressing Clinic

- Telephone 01438 284792

Children's Emergency Department

- Telephone 01438 284333

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - Telephone 111.

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language; please speak to your doctor or nurse.

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