Preparing Your Infant for Surgery



What part about surgery is most stressful for an infant?

Infants are too young to benefit from preoperative planning, education, and explanations. However, recognizing what is stressful to infants can guide you in planning for your baby's surgery. Things that are stressful to infants in the hospital may include the following:

- Separation from parents
- Having many different caregivers
- Seeing strange sights, sounds and smells
- New and different routines
- Interrupted sleep

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Day and night confusion

To find out more information about the pre-operative tours or to schedule a tour please contact the child life division at 718-670-2920.

How do I prepare my infant for surgery?

- Keep your baby's routine the same before the day of surgery.
- Make sure everyone in the family is well rested.

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- You may bring one of your baby's favorite things with you to the hospital. This will give your baby some comforts from home.
- Try to have at least one parent be with your baby at all times. This
 will allow the baby to have a familiar touch, voice and smile.
- The most important part about preparing your infant for surgery is for you to try to remain calm.
- Your baby will sense if you are frightened or stressed.
- Be well informed about what to expect on the day of surgery and ask questions to alleviate any fears you may have.
- Relaxed, nonverbal communication, such as voice, facial expressions, gestures, and body language can give positive assurance to your body.
- Be patient with your baby. It is normal for him/her to cry and be fussy during this stressful time. He/she may be very clingy and become hard to comfort and console.
- The brief period before surgery when the baby cannot eat or drink can be difficult. Plan to distract, rock, walk and comfort her/him during this time.
- Remember, too, to take care of yourself. Simplify your life during this time and do not be afraid to ask for help from family and friends during this time. Remaining positive and calm can help reduce your baby's anxiety.

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