

YOUR CHILD AND ANAESTHESIA

Having a child require surgery can be an anxious time for children and their families. Many parents and carers are understandably worried about their child having an anaesthetic.

I try to contact parents/carers prior to the day of surgery via a phone call. Unfortunately we all lead busy lives and sometimes it is not possible for both of us to be free at the same time. If you have any specific concerns please feel free to contact me at info@anaesthesia.com

What can you do as a parent to prepare your child

Below are some things you can do as a parent to make your child's anaesthetic experience as stress free as possible.

Children tolerate surgery better when they are well prepared. Some things to discuss are:

- The procedure planned - keep it very simple e.g. *fix your ears so you can hear better*
- That they will need to go to a hospital to have the procedure
- That you will be with them when they go off to sleep and will be there when they wake
- Nothing will hurt prior to going to sleep
- Dr Ben will be the doctor that helps them go to sleep. He will sing to them or tell them a story
- Young children (under 8) will have "magic" gas through a little pink mask that smells like lollies
- Older children (greater than 8) have the *option* of having a small needle prior to going to sleep. This is a quicker way of going to sleep and generally preferred. "Numbing" cream will be applied and children will usually not feel the needle. Children don't have to make their mind up regarding this until I discuss it with them on the day of their procedure.

Other things that parents can do:

- With younger children make it seem like an adventure
- Remain as calm as possible - children will pick up a lot of emotions from their parents
- If your child states they are scared reassure them that what is happening is safe but is it normal to feel the way they do
- Give children control over something on the day e.g. what they wear to hospital; what they eat following surgery. Just like adults kids don't like not being in control (particularly older children)

Premedication (I.e. "Premed")

- Sometimes medications to make children "sleepy" or "relaxed" prior to procedures are used
- I do not routinely use them as they are not generally needed & can delay recovery following the procedure

- If used, it is safe and will be given in a small amount of juice 40-50 mins prior to the procedure
- Children who *may* need a premedication include:
 - Children who remain very reluctant to have the procedure after being given the information outlined above
 - Those with a behavioural diagnoses e.g. ADHD
 - Children who have had bad experiences with healthcare previously (especially anaesthesia)

If you think your child may need a premed please contact me so this can be arranged.

Other issues

- It is normal for children to wriggle and move as they drift off to sleep. This can be concerning to parents/carers. Children will usually not remember this. When this happens it is important that we keep the mask on and efforts may be required to prevent the child hurting themselves.
- We always try to avoid forceful restraining (e.g. holding) of children. If I judge prior to the child entering theatre this may be required we may delay the procedure until they have had a premed (see above). With younger children we may ask you to cuddle the child either on the bed or on a chair as they go to sleep. If you have concerns regarding the use of any physical means of restraint feel free to discuss this with me.
- *Emergence delirium* is when children wake from anaesthesia very confused and disorientated. It can be very distressing to parents/carers. If this does occur you may be asked to come in to reassure and cuddle your child as this is often the best treatment.

I understand that going through this process is anxiety provoking. As already mentioned I often try to call parents prior to their child's procedure. However, if you have any questions or concerns please also feel free to contact me at info@lincolnanaesthesia.com