



# Surgery playbook



## Dear families,

We know surgery can be scary for our kids – and even us adults, too. Our team is with you every step of the way.

Families turn to us every day for expert, compassionate surgical care – and we've been verified as a Level I Children's Surgery Center (downtown campus) by the American College of Surgeons for making sure that each child receives just that. You can rest assured that your child is in the right hands at CHoR.

This playbook will help your family prepare for surgery – from when your child can have their last meal or drink before the procedure – to tips to make them comfortable afterward. Parents and guardians are key members of our team, and we encourage you to speak up if you have questions at any time.

Thank you for choosing us to care for your family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Neujahr".

Elias Neujahr, MHA, MBA  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.D. Herndon".

C.D. Anthony Herndon, MD  
Surgeon-in-chief

# Talking about surgery

Surgery can cause anxiety for both children and parents. Our child life specialists have a few tips to help everyone face the day with confidence.

- **Encourage your child to ask questions!** We're here to help.
- **Be honest** when talking with your child about an upcoming surgery and explain it in a way that they'll understand. Listen to their questions and help alleviate any fears. Most children want to know how much pain the surgery will cause; what they'll see, hear, smell, etc.; and where their parents will be when they come out of surgery. Plan ahead for these questions.
- **Keep in mind your child's age.** The younger the child, the simpler your explanation needs to be. Older children have a better understanding of their bodies and often have more specific concerns about surgery. Be open to listening to your child's fears and clarify any misconceptions.
- **Walk them through in steps:** "You'll get in your gown, then we'll play or read until the doctors come, then I'll kiss you on the cheek and the nurses will take you to the room for surgery. They'll put a mask on your face with medicine to help you fall asleep. When you wake up, I'll be here and you'll be done."
- **Packing a special bag** of comfort and distraction items can help ease anxiety. Include special books, toys and a blanket or stuffed animal. Include a favorite snack or drink for after surgery (if allowed).
- On the ride in, **play their favorite songs** to boost them up.
- Surgery IS scary, no matter how old you are. Let them know **it's OK to be nervous** and remind them surgery will make them feel better and there's a whole team dedicated to keeping them safe. Offer extra cuddles, compliments and reassurances.



Scan for a video about what to expect during surgery

# Preparing for surgery

## Day before surgery

You will receive a call at least one day before your surgery with your arrival time and instructions. **If you miss the call or do not receive a call at least 24 hours before your child's scheduled surgery, please call:**

- Downtown (Children's Pavilion & Children's Tower): **804-828-6302**
- Brook Road Pavilion: **804-228-5949**
- Short Pump Pavilion: **804-364-1424**

The night before surgery, your child should remove all jewelry, take a bath/shower, put on clean clothes and avoid all lotions, creams and powders

## Eating and drinking guidelines\*

For your child's safety, their diet must be restricted the night before surgery. They are allowed to have the following:

Clear liquids	<b>2</b> hours before surgery
Breast milk	<b>3</b> hours before surgery
Infant formula	<b>6</b> hours before surgery
Solid food	<b>6</b> hours before surgery

Allowed clear liquids include:

- Water
- Clear juice without pulp (i.e. apple juice is OK but orange juice is not)
- Carbonated drinks/sodas
- Black coffee and tea (NO milk or creamer)
- Non-particulate sports/electrolyte drinks (i.e. Gatorade and Pedialyte)
- Other clear drinks you can read print through (NO alcohol)

\*If your child has a feeding tube, your surgeon will discuss pre-surgery tube feeding guidelines. It is important to follow all eating, drinking and tube feeding guidelines. Surgery might need to be canceled if these instructions are not followed.

## Tips to help you prepare

- If your child gets sick or has a cold before surgery, please contact the surgeon's office as surgery may need to be postponed until your child is feeling better.
- Do not bring siblings on the day of surgery unless you are planning for them to join us in the RMHC Sibling Center (Children's Pavilion surgeries only). Ask your nurse for more information on this service.
- Do not plan other appointments or activities after surgery.
- For outpatient surgeries, the surgery and recovery time may take all morning and into the afternoon.



*These guidelines apply to healthy patients without gastric motility problems or acute intra-abdominal or airway pathology. The doctor or nurse will alert you if these guidelines do not apply to your child. Approved 5/2022.*

# Surgery day

## Arrival time

Unless otherwise notified, **you will be asked to arrive 1 – 2 hours before the start of your child’s surgery** so that we can get you registered and comfortable. Please arrive on time so we can care for your child and other patients on schedule.

## Locations and parking

**Children’s Pavilion** | 1000 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA

FREE self-parking is available in the Children’s Parking Deck. Enter the deck off 10th Street. Take the parking elevator to Level 1 – Sky Lobby and then take the clinic elevators to Level 2 to register.

**Short Pump Pavilion** | 11958 West Broad Street, Henrico, VA

Parking is available directly outside the building.

**Brook Road Pavilion** | 2924 Brook Road, Richmond, VA

Parking is available directly outside of the building.

Enter through the main entrance.

## What to bring

Please bring the following the day of surgery:

- A favorite comfort item, like a blanket or stuffed animal
- Cell phone charger
- Photo ID (for parent or guardian)
- Insurance card
- Financial screening papers (if applicable)
- Proof of guardianship/custody documentation (if applicable)

## Preoperative care: What to expect

Our team will do everything they can to make you and your child comfortable before, during and after surgery. Preoperative care (care before surgery) includes reviewing your child's surgery; monitoring of heartbeat, blood pressure and breathing; meeting with the anesthesia team; starting an IV line (as needed); and giving of medications and sedation (as needed).

## During surgery

You will have access to a waiting room nearby during your child's surgery. You'll also be able to track when your child is in the operating room or in recovery via a confidential tracking board (Children's Pavilion).

## Questions or concerns

Please don't hesitate to speak up and let one of our team members know if you have any questions or concerns before, during or after surgery.



# Recovery

## Postoperative care

- Once your child's surgery is complete, they'll be in the recovery room. Parents are generally allowed to be with their child during this time.
- After surgery, your child's surgeon will discuss postoperative care (caring for your child after surgery). You may receive information about:
  - Medications
  - Incision/wound care
  - Activity restrictions
  - Follow-up clinic appointments
- You may need to be home to care for your child for a few days after surgery depending on the type of surgery and expected recovery time.

## Important recovery information

- Follow all discharge instructions.
- Your child may experience constipation from inactivity and pain medication. Monitor your child's bowel movements and encourage them to drink plenty of fluids. Call the surgeon's office if constipation lasts more than two days.
- Call the surgeon's office if your child displays any of the following wound infection symptoms:
  - Fever
  - Redness
  - Pain due to swelling
  - Discharge from incision site (pus, oozing, etc.)
  - Severe pain not reduced with pain medication
  - Not urinating at all in a 24-hour period
  - Vomiting that will not stop
  - Inability to take in fluids
  - Severe vertigo/dizziness



## Medication refills

Refill requests\* can be made through the VCU Health MyChart patient portal or by calling (804) 828-CHOR (2467). If you are calling for a medication refill on a Friday, please call before noon so that prescriptions are not delayed until the following week.

\*Not applicable for surgeries at Brook Road.

## Questions or concerns

Please don't hesitate to speak up and let one of our team members know if you have any questions or concerns before, during or after surgery.

## Notes:

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## My surgery information

Date of surgery: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Day of the week: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. Surgeon: \_\_\_\_\_

Surgeon’s office phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Surgery location:  Children’s Pavilion, Level 2  Brook Road Pavilion  
 Short Pump Pavilion

Type of surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

## Special instructions:

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**Verified Level I  
Children's Surgery  
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