

Preparing for EUA or Surgery

The below are tips when preparing for an EUA (examination under anaesthetic) or surgical procedure from a parent's perspective. This information is intended to assist parents when preparing for their child's hospital stay and recovering after the procedure. It is critical that parent's ensure that they follow the hospital/surgeon's directions for their child's hospital admission and procedure. The hospital's instructions will include important information regarding when to arrive at the hospital and fasting instructions for your child.

Before hospital admission:

- Pack your child's hospital stay bag the day or night before admission. If you need to travel for your child's treatment you will need to prepare the hospital stay bag before departing home. Key items to pack that the hospital may not include in their preparation sheet are;
 - Favourite books/toys/pacifier
 - Change of clothes that are easy to put on - nothing fussy, and nothing that goes over your child's head.
 - Blanket or dressing gown to keep your child warm before the procedure – some hospitals require your child to wear a gown, which can cause your child to become cold & the job of the anaesthetist a bit difficult.
 - Bottles/formula/baby food – prepare this all the night before (formula in a small container that is easy to transfer into the bottle once your baby is ready to feed). The hospital may not have appropriate baby food (particularly if your child has an allergy, or is less than 9 months and eating simple baby food), so it is worth bringing commercial jar/packet food as a back-up.
- Expressing equipment if you are breast-feeding an infant – if using an electric pump you may also want to bring the battery pack power source, as there may not always be access to a power point in the waiting room in the hospital.
- Call the hospital to confirm the procedure (at least the day before – some hospitals require you to do this a few days or a week prior to surgery).
- Prepare your home for your child's recovery - over the counter pain medication suitable for your child's age (make sure your child's doctor has approved these for use), your child's favourite foods pre-made & your family meals pre-prepared for the next few days.
- Some other things you may want to pack - cell phone charger, paper and pencil for post-surgery instructions, cash for hospital parking if needed, calming music to listen to with headphones, parent/guardian snacks & water.

Fasting instructions:

You must insure that you follow the hospital's fasting instructions. If your child has eaten or taken fluids after the fasting instructions then at best your child's procedure will be delayed on the day, or at worst cancelled and re-scheduled. Below are some parent tips on fasting:

- For a baby or toddler, you may want to give them a milk feed (bottle or breast feed) just before the time your hospital instructions advise that milk/solids are to be taken. This may help with their hunger when you arrive at the hospital.

- Give your child water just before the time your hospital instructions advise that water can be taken.
- If you have not received information from your hospital regarding medications & eye drops call to confirm what medications you can give to your child prior to surgery.
- **DO NOT FEED YOUR CHILD MILK OR WATER AFTER THE TIME YOUR HOSPITAL HAS ADVISED UNLESS INSTRUCTED BY NURSING OR YOUR MEDICAL STAFF.**

Waiting for your child's procedure in the hospital:

The below are some tips for parents/guardians that may assist in the waiting period prior to surgery.

- Comb back your child's hair or put up to keep it out of the way of the surgery and they eye patch afterwards.
- You may want to use a small amount of Vaseline along your child's hairline – this may help to prevent hair getting caught in the tape. Be sure to not get any on the skin or the tape won't stick at all.
- Keep your child entertained with their favourite books and toys.
- Keep your child warm with a blanket or dressing gown once in their hospital gown.

Discharge & recovering at home:

You will want to make your child as comfortable as possible when you return home from the hospital.

- Ensure that you have received information from the nursing staff prior to being discharged regarding the following;
 - Medications your child requires post surgery (if there is a pharmacy at the hospital, have these filled before you leave the hospital);
 - Time, date and location of your post surgery follow-up with the Doctor;
 - Food/drinks your child can have at home;
 - Pain relief – types of pain relief and next time you can administer to your child – check the types of medication you can give and frequency (eg.tylenol/motrin in 3 hour rotating intervals – USA; or Panadol & Nurofen combination as per directions - Australia).
 - After hours contact if you have any questions or concerns once you get home.
 - Instructions on when to remove the eye patch, and when to give eye drops.
- Keep in mind that your child will be dilated after surgery, and if you have a way to block out sun on your car ride home, that will provide more comfort.
- When replacing your child's eye shield, use a spongy tape (e.g. 3M Nexcare brand -USA) – it sticks to the skin well and is gentler and easier to take off.
- Use a mirror/baby mirror to look at your child's eye indirectly (also helps for doctors!).
- If you are given ointment, use it. It really helps to keep the eye lubricated so there is less irritation.
- Removing the eye patch – wet the tape prior to removing, as it will help the tape to come off the skin.