

Other concerns or questions?

If you have any concerns once you are home, please call:

Daycare Surgery: 875-2345, local 7225
(Mon-Fri. 7am-7pm)

Your Family Doctor:

tel.# _____

For questions about your child's surgery call the surgeon:

tel. # _____

If you are very worried about your child's condition bring him/her to:

The Emergency Department

Open 24 hours.

Tel. 875-2345, local 7258

At Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia we believe parents are partners on the health care team. We want you to be as informed as possible. This brochure will answer some of your questions. Please ask about things you do not understand and share your concerns.

If you have any questions, please call:
604-875-2345, loc. 7225

*Developed by the health care professionals
of the Daycare Surgery Department
with assistance from the Department of
Learning & Development*

BCCH1020

© 2000 BC Children's Hospital

The First 24 Hours After a General Anesthetic



4480 Oak Street, Vancouver BC, V6H 3V4
604-875-2345
1-888-300-3088
www.bcchildrens.ca

The First 24 Hours after a General Anesthetic.

How soon your child recovers depends on the kind of anesthetic and operation. Your child may be wide awake and alert, sleepy or dizzy when s/he wakes up. Most children are unsteady on their feet for about 24 hours. During this time help your child choose play activities so that s/he doesn't fall and get hurt. Write down any advice from your nurse or doctor about returning to usual activities.

Aches, Pains Fever?

Your child may have a sore throat or nose from the tube that helped her/him to breathe during the anesthetic. Offer sips of a cold drink to soothe the throat. Your child may be hoarse, have a croupy cough, and stiff muscles for a few days. Ask your doctor to suggest some helpful pain medication before you leave the hospital.

Your child may have a local anesthetic or "freezing" (called a nerve block) before s/he leaves the operating room. This block controls pain after surgery. It numbs the hips and legs for about 6 hours. Help your child sit or lie but not get up till the numbness wears off completely. If your child has a block you will see a small puncture hole in the skin just under the incision or at the base of the spine.

Your child may have a fever. This sometimes happens after an anesthetic. Fever is more common if the child is not having enough to drink. Drinking is more important than eating for the first 24 hours after an anesthetic. **If the fever lasts more than 48 hours or goes above 38.5°C (101° F) let your surgeon or pediatrician know.**

What about Nausea and Vomiting?

Some children feel sick and throw up after an anesthetic. Your child may vomit so keep a plastic bag and a towel handy just in case! If your child throws up settle him/her, and after one hour offer small sips of water or ice chips. Gradually offer more to drink.

If your child vomits 2-3 times you can give Gravol (anti-nausea medication). You can buy this, without a prescription, from a drugstore. The pharmacist will help you decide how much Gravol to give your child.

Call your doctor for more advice if:

- ▶ your child continues to vomit for more than 24 hours,
- ▶ your child vomits more than once an hour for a few hours,
- ▶ Gravol does not stop the vomiting,
- ▶ your child throws up more than s/he drinks.

What food to offer.

At the hospital, after your child wakes up, offer clear drinks like water, apple juice, popsicles.

An hour or two later offer a little low fat food such as soup or cereal. Save hard to digest foods like pizza, hotdogs, french fries till the day after surgery. (If you promised your child hamburger as a treat, keep the promise another day).

Your doctor may give you special advice about your child's diet. If not, your child can eat her/his usual food the next day. Babies can continue breast feeds or formula once they keep down water or juice.

Any breathing problems?

It is unusual for a child to have breathing problems after an anesthetic.

If your child begins wheezing/croup or has difficulty breathing call your doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department.