

## How long can I stay in PACU?

You are welcome to stay as long as your child needs comfort and support. Although they want to support their child, some parents find the sights and sounds in PACU upsetting. You don't need to stay with your child if you feel uncomfortable. Please let the nurse know if you are feeling faint or want to leave. We will stay in touch about your child's progress.

## Recovery of patients during the night

If your child has surgery during the night, he/she may be taken to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to recover from the anesthetic. We will call you to be with your child here just as in the PACU.

## More information?

We encourage you to ask questions if you need more information. Ask any staff member.

You can help us improve our care. If you have any concerns while in PACU, please let us know. We welcome your suggestions.

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, local 7241

### Notes:

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# PACU

## Post

# Anesthetic Care Unit

Information for families  
of children having  
surgery



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## **Parent's Guide to the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU)**

We invite a parent to the child's bedside as soon as it is safe after an operation. Your special knowledge about him/her can help staff give better care. You can play a part in your child's care in the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU).

This brochure explains what to expect, so that the time in the PACU is less stressful. We will try to inform you about your child's progress. Please let us know if you have concerns about your child's care and recovery.

### **What is PACU?**

After an anesthetic or heavy sedation, children come to the PACU. The nurses who work here have extra training for this specialized area beside the operating rooms.

### **Who comes into PACU?**

The PACU is an urgent care area. The safe recovery of your child is our first concern. Staff must be able to respond quickly to the needs of children in their care. A crowded space is not easy to move through. This is why we ask that only one family member is with the child.

Your child will have technical support and one to one nursing care while he/she is unconscious. After your child wakes up, the nurse may divide attention between your child and one other.

Most children respond well to the comfort and care offered by staff in PACU. But, your child will feel secure when s/he sees you. A nurse or volunteer will let you know when your child arrives in PACU. As soon as we're sure your child does not require urgent medical care, you will be brought to him/her. If you do not hear from us when you expect to, please ask us for an update on your child's progress. You can bring a toy, pillow or blanket into PACU if this will be a comfort for your child.

### **Where do I wait while my child is having surgery**

You can wait in the patient waiting area in the Surgical Day Care Unit (SDCU) or in your child's hospital room. In SDCU, if you go for a walk or leave for a snack, tell the volunteer. Write your name, and where you are going, on the chalkboard.

### **How long will my child be in the PACU?**

Your child's stay depends on the operation or procedure. We measure body signs like pulse and respirations often and when the signs show that it is safe, s/he is taken to the ward or the SDCU. We will talk with you about this.

### **What will happen when I am in the PACU?**

We ask you to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all our patients and families. While in PACU, please stay near your child's bedside.

The nurse will tell you about your child's expected reactions. But, children respond differently. Some medicines make children confused, restless and dizzy. For your child's safety, please keep the stretcher side rails up. If you wish to lower them, please check with your child's nurse.

You know your child best and we want your child to be as comfortable as possible. If you see signs of thirst, discomfort, or other needs, tell your child's nurse. The nurse may give pain medication your child needs through an intravenous tube. You can help give "by mouth" medicine once your child is awake.