

The Top 10 Questions and Answers for Parents with a Child in the Post Anesthetic Recovery Room



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

1. Why isn't my child waking up?

Sometimes children take longer to wake up. It depends on what medications your child was given before and during the surgery. It also depends on the length and type of surgery. Sometimes children are sleepier if they were tired before the surgery, or if it was nap time either when the surgery started or ended.

2. When can my child eat or drink something?

Your nurse in the recovery room or surgical day care unit will let you know when your child can start eating and drinking. It depends on the length and type of surgery your child has had. If your child is allowed to eat and drink right away, it is best to start with clear fluids such as water, popsicles, or apple juice. Your child will have these types of fluids for a couple of hours. If your child can take these fluids, then she or he can start to take other fluids and then a light diet for the rest of the day.

3. Is it normal for my child to be confused and drowsy?

Yes. The medications your child has been given makes her or him like this. The drowsiness and confusion goes away as the effects of the medications wear off.

4. Is my child in pain?

Children may have pain after the surgery. The nurses looking after your child will ask your child and you if he or she is having pain. The nurses also have a special way to assess a child's pain if she or he cannot talk. They will work to make your child as comfortable as possible after the surgery.

5. Why is my child shivering? Is my child cold?

Not likely. Your child has been given warm blankets when she or he arrived in the recovery room. Your child is shivering because of the effects of some of the medications given to her or him in the operating room. The shivering is a normal response to these medications. It will stop.

6. Why is my child so pale? Is this normal?

Sometimes it is normal. It depends on the type and length of surgery. Your child might also be pale because she or he is in pain or not feeling well. If you are concerned, please discuss this with your nurse or doctor.

7. Why are my child's eyes red?

This is because of the effects of some of the medications your child was given in the operating room. This will go away once the medications wear off. This is very common after surgery.

8. When can we go home?

Your doctor will be able to tell you how many nights you might need to stay in the hospital. Sometimes children who have a day surgery procedure need to stay longer in the hospital. The nurse looking after your child will be able to tell you about how long the stay will be. This will also depend on how your child recovers after surgery.

9. When can the IV come out?

When it is almost time to go home, your nurse will take the IV out. It stays in, although it may not be used, in case we need to give your child any medications such as for nausea or pain.

10. Was my child crying?

Every child wakes up differently. How your child wakes up and whether or not she or he cries and is upset is hard to predict.

Sometimes children wake up upset. This happens for many reasons. It could be because:

- of the medications used during surgery. Once they wear off, children are more like themselves again.
- children are sore after surgery
- children are scared because they are in a place they do not know.
- some children wake up just like they do at home. For example, if they don't like waking up and are upset after naps at home, they may be the same after waking up after surgery.