

Oral Surgery for Children

This information is for parents of children having oral surgery in hospital. It explains what is involved and gives some aftercare advice. Why come into hospital for oral surgery? Children often have to come into hospital for oral surgery- this includes all operations specific to the mouth and may also involve children having dental extractions.

Preparation for coming to hospital:- Your child will have a medical check-up with a nurse to check that they are well enough for the operation. This includes checks on their height and weight, their medical history and any coughs, colds or heart murmurs.

- If your child has asthma, diabetes or any allergies please tell the nurse.
- The nurse will explain what will happen on the day. Please ask any questions that you want to.

Please note:

1. Your child must not have any vaccinations within 3 days of the operation or it will have to be cancelled.
2. You must contact the hospital 2 days before the operation if your child develops a cough or cold, as the operation will need to be postponed.

On the day of the operation

IMPORTANT - your child must not eat anything for 6 hours before the operation. They may have clear fluids (not milk) up to 2 hours before the operation. There may be other specific instructions in the admission letter.

On arrival at the ward:

- A nurse will go through your child's details with you.
- Your child will be given a gown to change into.
- An anaesthetist will visit your child before the operation to discuss how your child will go off to sleep.
- You will see a doctor who will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand the procedure and agree to go ahead with it on behalf of your child. You may already have done this earlier at a clinic visit.
- You will then be able to accompany your child to the operating department. One parent/guardian may go into the anaesthetic room with their child and stay until they fall asleep.

What does the operation involve?

- Your child will be given a general anaesthetic. To make sure that the needle does not cause pain some anaesthetic cream ("magic cream") will be placed on your child's hands to numb the skin.
- A small tube (cannula) is inserted into a vein in the back of the hand, through which medication is given. Please be aware that your child will fall asleep very quickly.
- Alternatively, your child may be given gas to breathe via a facemask held near the mouth and nose, which will also make them fall asleep.
- Once your child is asleep they will be moved to the operating room for the surgeon to carry out the procedure. Removal of teeth is completed quite quickly but your child may be away from the ward for about an hour.
- A clot will form over the area and heal naturally. Occasionally, stitches will be needed to help healing.
- Your child will be given some local anaesthetic to numb the mouth and prevent any pain immediately after the operation.
- Once the operation is complete, your child will be taken to the recovery room where you will be able to sit with them until they are able to return to the ward.

Back on the ward

- The nurses will make checks on your child's progress and observe them for any signs of bleeding. There may be some bleeding when your child wakes up which will gradually settle down. The mouth will also be numb from the local anaesthetic.
- They will be encouraged to drink as soon as possible and to eat small amounts of food.
- Your child will not be able to rinse out their mouth on the day of the operation as this may cause bleeding.
- The cannula will remain in your child's hand until they are ready to go home. Your child will need to remain on the ward for a minimum of 4 hours after the operation.
- If your child experiences any pain, please tell the nurses and they will be able to provide your child with painkillers such as paracetamol (calpol).

Going home

- Your child should be taken home and cared for by an adult that they know well and who is available at all times for 48 hours following the operation.
- The anaesthetic may make your child feel more tired and irritable for a few days. You should encourage them to go to bed a bit earlier and rest during the day.
- Some children may also continue to feel, or be, sick for a short while. Please encourage them to take small amounts of light food and regular fluids. If these feelings persist, or become worse please contact your GP for advice.

You will be advised if a follow appointment is necessary and arrangements made.

- You can keep your child comfortable by giving them painkillers such as paracetamol (calpol) during the first few days. Once any pain is under control your child may return to school – this is usually 3-5 days after the operation. Your child may also be given antibiotics to take home.

• **Your child should not rinse their mouth for the first 24 hours after the operation as this may encourage bleeding.** After 24 hours you can prevent infection by keeping the mouth clean with rinses after food. If your child is able to do so this can be done with a warm salt-water mouth bath. The water should be as warm as possible and a spoonful of salt added. Take a mouthful and hold it still for a couple of minutes before spitting out. This can be repeated 4 times a day. If you are given a mouthwash to take home, the nurses will show you how to use this. Your child can keep their teeth clean with gentle tooth brushing with a toothbrush softened under a hot tap.

• Your child should also be discouraged from sucking, or poking, the tongue into the tooth socket as this may also cause bleeding. • Your child will need to eat a soft diet for a few days, which again reduces the chance of bleeding. An ice- lolly may help to reduce pain and /or swelling. • If bleeding does occur, place a small piece of rolled cloth into the area where the bleeding is coming from (usually a tooth socket). Keep your child upright

and get them to bite on the cloth for 15 minutes, or until the bleeding stops. If the bleeding continues, or you are concerned, please contact the hospital. • Any stitches that are in the mouth are usually dissolvable. These should drop out after a period of 7-10 days. Please try to discourage your child from playing with any stitches with their tongue as this can work them loose.

Risks and complications

Oral surgery is generally very safe, but most procedures have some risks. **Please speak to your child's oral surgeon before the operation if you have any worries about these risks.**