

Pediatric Surgery Discussion Guide

How will my child's pain be managed after surgery?

There are many options to help control your child's pain after surgery. Ask the doctor what the best plan is for your child.

I'd like to minimize my child's need for opioids. What non-opioid options are available?

There are a variety of medications that can be administered before, during and after surgery to minimize the need for opioids. They may include non-opioids, such as NSAIDs like aspirin or ibuprofen, or long-acting local anesthetics that are injected during a procedure and numb the area around the surgical site for the first few days when pain is at its worst.

What do you need to know about my child to help create a customized pain management plan?

Your child's medical history (e.g., allergies, breathing/respiratory issues, stomach/gastrointestinal issues, current prescriptions, etc.) will help the surgeon better understand your child's treatment needs.

Is this procedure associated with a lot of pain?

Ask the doctor about the level of pain and duration of discomfort that is typically associated with the type of surgery your child is having so you know what to expect afterwards. When it comes to common pediatric surgeries (e.g., spinal fusion, appendectomy, hernia, etc.) pain can vary based on the part of the body that is being operated on and the invasiveness of the procedure.

When we return home, what guidelines should I be aware of? When can my child get back to normal activities (e.g., attending school, playing sports, etc.)?

It's important that your child gets plenty of rest when they return home. Talk to the doctor about how long it might take for your child to get back to everyday activities. There may be things he/she can do with your help to help speed their recovery (e.g., proper wound care, physical therapy, etc.).

How long will it take for my child to fully recover from surgery? What will it involve?

Each person's recovery from surgery is personal and can vary depending on the surgery performed and their overall health. Many pediatric surgeries involve rest and limiting physical activity so talk to the doctor about ways you might be able to keep your child entertained and comfortable while they recover after surgery.

What happens when the medications from surgery wear off?

The type of medication(s) your child receives can depend on the type of procedure they have. Talk with the doctor about any pain or discomfort they may be experiencing after surgery and make sure you have a plan in place. Also, ask about non-opioid options that provide pain relief for the first few days following surgery, when pain is often at its peak.

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If Your Child is Prescribed an Opioid, Ask These Questions:

- Is this safe to take with other medications?
- Is this the lowest appropriate dose/number of pills?
- When can my child stop taking this, and how should I wean them off?
- How can I properly dispose of the pills if he/she doesn't use all of them?