

Discharge Instructions after Anesthesia for Children

Here are some tips on how to help care for your child today. Your doctor may also have directions about diet, activity and pain management.

Going home

It is helpful to have a second adult to help watch your child on the car ride. Your child may feel sleepy, dizzy or nauseous. If your child falls asleep in the car seat, make sure they are not having trouble breathing. You might need to adjust your child's head position or wake them up if they have trouble breathing. If you're driving alone, you may need to stop to check on your child.

Managing nausea and diet

Nausea is a common side effect after surgery. Here are a few tips to help:

- Encourage your child to drink to stay hydrated.
- Do not push your child to eat.
- Start with clear liquids and soup. These are easier to digest.
- Next try soft foods like applesauce, Jell-O™ or mashed potatoes.
- Slowly move to solid foods. Avoid fatty, rich or spicy foods.
- Smaller, frequent meals are easier to digest than 3 large meals a day.
- Give pain medicines with a small amount of food.
- Infants may not tolerate a full feeding at first. You may need to reduce the amount of time breastfeeding or give a smaller bottle.

Pain management

Some discomfort is to be expected after surgery. Both pain medicines and non-medicine techniques can help reduce discomfort. This can include heat, ice, relaxation, distraction or positioning.

- If your child is prescribed a pain medicine, please follow the instructions.
- Be careful giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) along with a prescription pain medicine (ex: Hycet®), as some medicines contain acetaminophen. Too much acetaminophen can cause liver failure and death.

Activity and Behavior

Children may be sleepy and unsteady on their feet after surgery. Safety measures include:

- Having a responsible adult stay with your child today.
- Avoiding activities with that could result in injury. Avoid running, climbing on playground equipment, riding bikes or swimming.
- Be careful using steps at home.
- Agitation, restlessness and crying are very common after surgery. This usually improves after the first few hours.

Call the doctor if your child:

- Will not drink, is not going to the bathroom or has vomited 3 or more times.
- Is having trouble breathing or speaking.
- Has trouble waking up or cannot be woken up.
- Has a fever over 101.5 F.