

# Preparing Your Child for Surgery: Adolescents (13-18 Years)

Coming to the hospital can be a difficult experience for children of any age as there are many new sights, sounds and unfamiliar faces. Preparing your child ahead of their hospital visit can help decrease his/her anxiety and fear and increase his/her ability to cope with what is happening. It can be difficult to find the right words to say to your child so we have created this information sheet to help you prepare your child for surgery in a way that provides simple, honest and accurate information.

## Your child's development at this age:

- Want to have more control and independence in daily activities
- May request to be involved in medical discussions
- May be worried about possible pain and body changes after surgery
- May be worried about missing peers and social activities due to hospital stay
- May want to know more specific details about their surgery



## How you can help your child:

- Prepare your child approximately 7+ days before the surgery by:
  - Discuss any possible changes in your child's appearance or daily activities as a result of his/her surgery
  - Talk to your child about anesthesia and remind him/her that they will not feel, see or hear anything during surgery
  - Include your child in discussions with the healthcare team
- Check your child's understanding by asking him/her to repeat what they understood from the doctor's visit
- Ensure that your child is given the chance to share his/her worries, opinions and questions
- Respect your child's privacy and need for independence
- Discuss with your child what to do if he/she feels anxious (listening to music, speaking to friends/-family, deep breathing exercises, etc.)
- Remain calm as your child can sense your emotions
- Ask your child if he/she would like their peers involved and how?
- Encourage your child to pack a bag for the hospital visit with his/her personal items (phone, journal, etc.)

[More information on the back](#)  
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**Remember:**

You know your child best. Please share any information about your child with the nurse or doctor so they can best support your family during your stay at Sidra.

Child Life Specialists are experts in child development and can help your child to feel more comfortable about surgery. This can be done through education and preparation, teaching and practicing coping strategies or by providing play opportunities to help normalize their environment.

If you think your child would benefit from additional support at the time of their surgery, please ask your nurse or doctor to call your team's Child Life Specialist.

Sidra Medicine cares about your health. For reliable health information, visit our Patient Resource Center or find us online at [www.sidra.org](http://www.sidra.org). The information in this leaflet should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and the advice of your doctor. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.

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