

Managing your child's pain in hospital



This brochure outlines how you can prepare your child for surgery and assist with their pain management after surgery.

Before surgery

Ask your child's doctor or nurse to explain to you and your child why the surgery is needed and how it is done. It will help your child if you re-explain the procedure and answer their questions. You can use a doll or toy to explain.

We recommend you explain the surgery to your child 3–4 days before the procedure and again just before surgery.

What do I say if my child asks "will it hurt"?

Always be honest. Teenagers in particular respect directness and honesty. A good response could be "some children say it hurts, others say it's just uncomfortable".

Distraction methods

Decide with your child which distraction methods to use. Let your child decide whether they want to lie down or sit. They may want to be with you or by themselves.

Here are some ways to distract your child during their hospital stay:

Babies and infants	Children	Adolescents
Rocking and stroking Rattles Soft music Singing Reading	Deep breathing Counting Reading Colouring or drawing Watching favourite TV shows	Listening to music Watching TV Choice of parent/guardian presence Hand holding Mind pictures - guided imagery



Assessing your child's pain

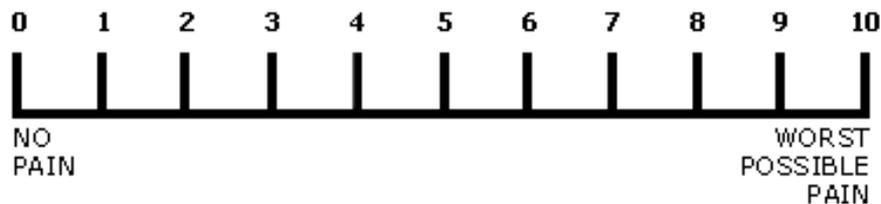
Depending on your child's age, the nurses and doctors will use different ways to measure your child's pain.

Children 0 to 3 years: a behavioural scale is used to assess pain in babies and infants. The nurses and doctors assess your child's level of activity, facial expressions, amount of crying and how easy it is to console your child.

Children 3 to 7 years: the 'Faces Pain Scale' can be used to assess pain in young children. Nurses and doctors will ask your child to pick the face which best matches their pain. The faces range from a smiling face for no pain to a crying face for a lot of pain.



Children over 7 years: A numerical scale can be used to assess the level of pain in older children. The nurses and doctors will ask your child to give their pain a value from zero meaning no pain, to 10 meaning a lot of pain.



Pain treatment options

Before surgery

The anaesthetist may recommend medicines for pain management or sedation to be given in the lead-up to the procedure. EMLA/AnGel cream can reduce the pain of injections; this is usually put on the skin up to an hour before surgery.

During surgery

Most children need a general anaesthetic for surgery. This prevents feeling pain during surgery and minimises stress for your child. Some minor procedures may be done under sedation instead.

Your anaesthetist will explain which option is best for your child.

After Surgery

Your child's pain can be treated in a number of ways. Some options include:

- paracetamol (Panadol), oxycodone (Oxynorm/Endone) and ibuprofen (Nurofen).
- Injections for stronger pain may be used, but this is rarely needed for procedures at the Eye and Ear.

Your doctor or nurse can advise which option is best for your child.

After surgery

- As a parent/guardian you are a good judge of your child's pain.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you're worried about your child's pain.
- Stay with your child until they are calm.
- Listen to what your child tells you and watch what they do.
- Use distraction methods, explained above.
- Talk to your child about what they did well. Even if your child was upset, find a positive to promote a sense of achievement.

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Managing your child's pain #45 | Owner: Surgical Services
Last published: 13/09/17 | Next review: 13/09/19

