DR STEPHAN KLEYN

SPECIALIST ANAESTHESIOLOGIST

MBChB (Stell) | DA (SA) | FCA (SA) | MMed (Anaes) (UCT)

drskleyn@capea.co.za | Cape Town, South Africa



PAEDIATRIC ANAESTHESIA INFORMATION

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SURGERY

Children understand and cope with surgery in different ways depending on their age and temperament.

Younger children usually do best with simple, reassuring explanations given the day before surgery, while older children often appreciate more detail and time to think and ask questions.

Please encourage your child to talk about how they feel – and answer their questions in a way they can understand.

Helpful videos you may like:

- A child's guide to anaesthesia
  (Paediatric Anaesthesia Community of South Africa)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PG2eQF48crk
- Rees Bear has an anaesthetic
  (Royal College of Anaesthetists)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va8pDylZSkA

SPECIAL NOTES FOR CHILDREN

- Please bring along a favourite comfort item such as a teddy, book, or tablet/cell phone on the day of surgery. These can be used while waiting and may even go into theatre with your child to help them feel calm as they fall asleep.
- One parent or guardian may accompany their child into theatre and stay with them until they are asleep under anaesthetic. You will then be shown back to the ward or waiting area, where you can wait until we return your child to you.
- **NB**: Please follow the fasting guidelines below carefully. We encourage clear fluids up until 1 to 2 hours before surgery as this helps your child stay more comfortable while waiting and is beneficial around the time of anaesthesia.

FASTING INSTRUCTIONS (VERY IMPORTANT)

Light meal or milk-containing drinks: up to 6 hours before surgery	Breast milk: up to 4 hours before surgery	Clear fluids only (water, clear apple juice, black tea): up to 1 to 2 hours before surgery

BEFORE THE OPERATION

I will meet you and your child before surgery, whenever possible, to explain the anaesthetic plan and discuss pain relief options. If needed, a light sedative may be given to help your child feel more relaxed.

DURING THE PROCEDURE

A parent or guardian may accompany their child into theatre until they are asleep.

- Younger children usually fall asleep with anaesthetic gas through a mask. This can take a few minutes during which they may move around, make noises, or have irregular breathing. Once your child is asleep, you will be escorted out and the IV drip will be placed.
- Older children are usually given anaesthetic medicine into a vein (intravenous). A numbing cream or patch may be used beforehand to make the drip more comfortable.

I will be with your child for the entire procedure and monitoring equipment is used throughout to ensure their safety.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

Your child will be monitored in the recovery area before returning to the ward. It is normal for them to be sleepy, confused, thirsty, or hungry at first. A sore throat or hoarse voice may occur but usually settles quickly.

Some children, especially younger ones, may wake up feeling unsettled or tearful for a short time. Nausea or vomiting can happen despite our best efforts and can be treated if needed.

LASTLY

I will see you and your child before surgery to go through everything in more detail and to answer any questions or concerns you may have right now. My aim is to provide the safest, calmest and most comfortable experience possible for your child. I look forward to meeting you and supporting you and your family through this.