

Children's pre-operative assessment clinic

Your child has been added to the waiting list to have an operation at Barnet Hospital. They need to attend the paediatric pre-operative assessment clinic. This appointment is to check that your child is fit for their operation and to provide you with information about the procedure. We will also help prepare your child for what will happen on the day of the operation.

Pre-assessment appointments last 30-60 minutes, except in the case of ENT (ear, nose and throat) patients. Pre-assessment appointments for ENT patients can last for up to three hours and may include a hearing test. ENT pre-assessment appointments are normally held on Friday afternoons.

As space in our waiting area is limited, we would appreciate it if only one adult accompanies your child to their appointment.

Parental responsibility

The person accompanying your child for both pre-assessment and their operation must have legal parental responsibility, as they will need to give consent for the procedure. Failure to gain consent from the person with legal parental responsibility may mean we need to re-schedule the appointment and your child's operation may be delayed.

A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he is:

- married to the child's mother
- listed on the birth certificate (for children born in England and Wales after 2003, or for children born in Scotland after 2006).

If you have gained parental responsibility through a family court, you will need to bring the relevant paperwork.

The day before surgery

The day before the operation a nurse will call you to confirm your child's fasting time and when you will need to come in the next day. This call will appear on your phone screen as 'no caller ID'.

- For operations on a Monday, we will call you on the preceding Friday between midday and 4pm.
- For operations on a Wednesday, you will be called on Tuesday between 2pm and 5pm.

We will make three attempts to contact you but we are not able to leave a message due to confidentiality. Not answering may lead to a delay in your child's operation or it may become necessary to cancel the surgery.

If your child is being breast-fed you should mention this to the nurse as fasting times are slightly different compared with solids or formula milk.

Fasting instructions for the day of the operation

It is important that your child has an empty stomach before anaesthesia and surgery. This is because under anaesthetic, food or drink may come up into the back of the throat and cause damage to the

lungs.

Morning operation

- If your child is due to attend Barnet Hospital between 7.30am and 11.30 am, they are likely to have their surgery that morning. Therefore, they should not eat after 2.30am that day. This includes formula and cow's milk, as well as sweets and chewing gum.
- Your child may have a glass of water only up until 6.30am.

Afternoon operation

- If your child has been told to come to the Barnet Hospital at 11:30am or later, they are likely to have their surgery that afternoon. Therefore, a light breakfast must be finished before 6.30am. They must not eat after this time. This includes formula and cow's milk, as well as sweets and chewing gum.
- Your child may have a glass of water only up until 10.30am.

If your child eats or drinks anything after the times set out above, the operation will be cancelled for their safety.

The day of surgery

Please arrive at the time given. In the unlikely event we have not been able to contact you, please come at the time provided in your appointment letter.

Remember:

- Follow the fasting times carefully to avoid the operation being cancelled, or your child being hungry for longer than needed.
- Bring all of your child's regular medication, including inhalers, to the hospital, as we may not be able to supply them.
- Children having ear, nose and throat procedures may go to theatre in clean cotton pyjamas with a wide neck, separate top and bottoms, and no metal fastenings. 'Onesies' or baby grows are not permitted.
- If your child is having an operation in the afternoon, please bring overnight clothes and toiletries as you may need to stay overnight.
- We want your child to feel as relaxed as possible, so please bring in a favourite toy, dummy or comforter.
- Children are not allowed to go home by public transport after their operation. You will need to arrange your own transport. Reception staff will be able to help you arrange a taxi.

Pregnancy testing

National guidelines require us to carry out a pregnancy test on all girls who have started their periods before they have an operation. We understand that this is a sensitive subject, and appreciate your co-operation.

If you have any questions, please call the Barnet Hospital day services unit and ask to speak to the nurse in charge. The number is 020 8216 5063.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please ask a member of staff.