



Taking Care *of Your Child*

Now that your child has visited the doctor, received a diagnosis and/or gone for surgery and received post-operative care, what else can you do as a parent to protect your child? Management of a condition begins at the hospital and ends at home, if a child's parents follow the right remedies and medications to reduce any risk of complications. It is important to know what you can expect, and with the right methods, your child too can live a normal life span and allow the defect to heal and close on its own.

The Shaky First Steps

Within a few days after surgery, your child's energy levels should start returning back to normal. You can keep children entertained and engaged through reading or board games, but physical activities should be minimised as they will need to rest more often during the day.

Usually on the third day after surgery, the dressing around your child's wound is removed. Do not apply oil, cream or powder to the wound, and ensure that their hygiene is well taken care of. They may be allowed to take a bath on the fourth day after surgery, but only if the doctor gives permission. Ensure that

the site of the wound is cleaned and dried with a fresh towel after shower. Do not use the same towel used to clean your child's body. If all goes well, the post-surgical wound should be healed by the time they head home.

A dietitian will usually be on-hand to advise you on how to improve your child's nutritional intake. Immediately after surgery, the patient will only be able to take plain water. When their situation becomes better, they can be given milk followed by porridge. Ensure that their fluid intake is restricted in the first week after surgery.

What To Expect From Your Child

Ensure that the medication prescribed by the doctor is taken on-time, as per the prescription. Do not stop this medication without the doctor's advice. Before your child is discharged, the hospital will give you a follow-up appointment to check on their condition. In case of emergency, you may seek assistance at the nearest hospital.

You may also see some behavioural changes in your child, especially if they are young.



Some children may become more demanding of attention and want to stay close to their parents.



Some children may experience difficulty sleeping or undergo a change in sleeping habits.



Some children may become temperamental and show more anger towards others, while some children may become quieter.



Some children may start regressing in their behaviour, acting much younger than they are. Know that many of these changes are normal and will improve after some time.

Our Duty of Care

1

Maintain good hygiene to prevent any infection at the wound site. If any redness, swelling or oozing occurs at the wound, look for assistance at the nearest hospital.

Your child will start recovering more energy after about 2 weeks or so. Their activity levels will steadily increase over the course of a month before returning to normal. However, they should stay at home after being discharged for a minimum of 6 weeks before they are allowed to return to school.

2

3

If your child experiences some pain in the area where they were operated on, it is wise to take pain relief medication administered by the doctor. This pain will improve over time, but if it becomes more severe, please see your doctor.

Finally, make sure that the patient gets a healthy and balanced diet! The wound heals more efficiently when your child gets adequate protein from fish, chicken, egg, tofu or dairy products.

4

Call for Help if Your Child is Experiencing...



- Severe trouble breathing
- Coughing up pink, foamy mucus
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain, pressure or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw, upper belly or in one or both arms
- Light-headedness
- A fast or irregular heartbeat
- Sudden fatigue during normal activities