

Your presence can be reassuring and comforting for your child. You may talk to your child and hold their hand—any emotional support you are able to provide at this time is welcomed. Since moving about in the PACU can be disruptive and may interfere with the staff's activities, we ask that you remain at your child's bedside while visiting. Going in and out of the PACU independently is discouraged.

**Note the following important information when you visit your child in the PACU:**

- You will remain updated by the Family Waiting Room Patient Tracking Board.
- A nurse or volunteer will bring you back to see your child. Do not enter the PACU unless escorted. Because space is limited, we ask that only 1 or 2 adult family members visit at a time.
- The PACU is a large, open area where all patients are easily visible. Your child may be in the pediatric room in the PACU.
- We must honor each patient's right to privacy and confidentiality. We ask that you do not talk to other patients or ask about their child's condition.
- You may be asked to leave the PACU in the event of a patient emergency. If this should happen, return to the Family Waiting Area.

**We understand the difficulty that some parents have seeing their child during this phase of their illness or surgery. Do not feel that you must stay in the PACU, or that you must visit. Your child will receive the best possible care and you will receive updates on your child's condition throughout the surgical and recovery process.**



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[www.marshfieldchildrens.org/child-life](http://www.marshfieldchildrens.org/child-life)

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## Guidelines for Parents

Visiting the Post Anesthesia  
Care Unit (PACU)



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Because of the important role parents play in providing information about their child's needs as well as in the recovery of their child after surgery, the PACU nurses have a visitation program where parents can sometimes be with their child as the child awakens from surgery.

The following information will help you understand the routine and provide information for those who wish to visit your child in the PACU.

### **Important things to know**

- Bring a list of medicines the child is taking; be sure you know the dose and time medicine was last taken. This includes over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. If child is prescribed inhalers, bring inhalers in for the day of surgery.
- Follow instructions the surgeon gave regarding child not eating or drinking before their surgery—if not followed, surgery may be delayed or even canceled.

- If your child has a cough, cold, flu-like symptoms, fever, or any strange symptoms before procedure/surgery, notify your primary care doctor right away.

### **What to Expect BEFORE Surgery**

- On the day of surgery, you will meet all the members of your surgical team: surgeon, anesthesiologist, nurse anesthetist, pre-op nurse, operating room nurse, and other health care professionals.
- Depending on the surgery/procedure, a blood test, urinalysis, vital signs (temperature, pulse rate, respiration, and blood pressure) and weight may be taken.
- Nurses will ask questions about your child's general health, family's health history, and allergies. The nurse will complete a physical examination before surgery.
- If your child is a surgical patient, a surgeon and an anesthesiologist will visit and parent(s) will be asked to read and sign consent forms.
- An IV (intravenous) line may be placed before surgery so appropriate medicine may be given.
- The surgical nurse will come and introduce themselves and verify the patient's name and date of birth, allergies, name of surgeon, and type of surgery.
- A Child Life specialist may come to visit the patient and family to help minimize the stressful and potentially negative impacts and to maximize the opportunities for positive and supportive experiences.

### **What to Expect AFTER Surgery**

Once surgery is complete, your child will be brought into the PACU. The PACU nurse will be with your child while waking up from anesthesia. While in PACU, your child may have an IV line and may have tubes and/or drains, depending upon their surgery. They also will be connected to monitoring devices. It takes some time for the PACU nurse to complete the assessment(s) and make your child as comfortable as possible. After surgery, the family will be notified in the waiting room. Only 1 or 2 adult family members will be allowed to visit their child in the PACU. Do not enter the PACU unless escorted.

#### **Before your child can leave the PACU:**

- Body temperature must be normal
- Symptoms of nausea must be minimal
- Vital signs must be stable
- Post-operative pain must be tolerable

Each child's response time for waking up will depend on the type and amount of anesthesia given, as well as the length and type of surgery. Recovery time is generally 1 to 2 hours. If your child will be moved to a hospital room, they may spend a longer time in the PACU while their hospital room is being prepared for them.

If going home the same day of surgery, the nurse will review discharge care instructions specific to your child's surgery/procedure to be followed once your child is home.