

## Helpful hints:Your child's Heart surgery

### Devoted to children

At Cook Children's Medical Center, we are uniquely devoted to children. All treatment is based on the understanding that a child's needs are different from those of an adult.

To help make your child's stay as easy and comfortable as possible, we have prepared this guide to cardiothoracic surgery. If you have further questions, please ask your child's doctor or nurse.

### Cardiothoracic surgery

Congenital heart defects result from the failure of a child's heart and/or any of the major blood vessels near the heart to develop normally. Cardiothoracic surgery is often the most effective treatment option.

The cardiothoracic surgeons and staff at Cook Children's Medical Center perform approximately 400 surgeries every year. Our success in treating patients with congenital heart defects makes us one of the top pediatric cardiac care institutions in the United States.

### What to expect

#### *At your child's preoperative visit*

On the morning of your child's scheduled preoperative visit, you will need to register in Patient Registration on the first floor of Cook Children's Medical Center, near Starbucks and Camelot Court. Following registration, you will be escorted to the Surgery Check-in area on the second floor of the medical center.

A nurse and nurse practitioner will complete a medical history and physical exam of your child, including a weight and height measurement. You may also meet with an anesthesiologist during the visit. Your child will have a chest X-ray and blood work done. Your child also may have an echocardiogram and/or electrocardiogram.

You will receive instructions regarding what to expect on the day of surgery, diet restrictions, bathing instructions and when to arrive for surgery.

#### *Cardiac Intensive Care Unit tour*

If you would like to have a tour of the medical center and the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit, we are happy to arrange this for you.

### The day of surgery

You will need to return to the Surgery Check-in area. When it is time to prepare your child for surgery, you will be accompanied to the room where you will begin your day. You may stay with your child and accompany him or her to the preoperative holding area. When your child goes into the operating room, you will be asked to go to the cardiac waiting room. We request if you have many family members and friends with you, to wait in the larger waiting room. While your child is in surgery, you do not have to stay in the waiting room, as long as a member of the operating room staff has your contact information.

## After surgery: Cardiac Intensive Care Unit

Your child will be admitted to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit to be monitored for the initial phase of their recovery. There will be a dedicated team to care for your child consisting of cardiac intensivists and specialized cardiac nurses.

Your child will have some or all of the following:

- An incision down the middle of the chest (sternotomy) or the side of the chest (thoracotomy), which is covered with either an opaque dressing or an adhesive bandage
- A breathing tube to assist with breathing
- IV lines to give medications and nutrition
- An arterial line to monitor blood pressure and obtain blood samples
- A bladder catheter to monitor urine output
- A chest tube to collect fluid from the chest
- Pacing wires to allow caregivers to help the heart beat at a certain rate
- An intracardiac line to monitor pressure in the heart
- A continuous EKG monitor to assess heart rate and rhythm
- A pulse oximeter to monitor oxygen level in the blood
- A sensor on the forehead and/or back to monitor oxygen level in the brain and kidneys

## Nursing care

Your child will receive one-on-one nursing care initially after surgery. As your child's condition

improves, the monitoring devices and lines will be removed. Your child's progress will determine his or her length of stay in Cardiac Intensive Care Unit.

## Visitation guidelines

Parents are encouraged to visit as often as they feel comfortable. Brothers and sisters are allowed to visit at the parent's discretion and must be accompanied by a parent. Other family members and friends may visit on a limited basis. Parents are welcome to stay overnight but please note, the amount of space in the rooms is limited. You will receive visitation information from the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit staff members. Child Life specialists are available to help you prepare your children for all they will see and experience; your nurse will assist you in arranging this.

A parent is welcome to stay with the child at all times. We encourage you to take breaks from your child's bedside to eat, drink and rest. There is a microwave, refrigerator, shower and lockers in a designated area available for your use. Towels for the shower are provided.

## After Cardiac Intensive Care Unit stay

Your child will be transferred to another floor for the remainder of your stay. Pediatric nursing staff members, Child Life specialists, a cardiologist and nurse practitioners will care for your child until it is time to return home.

## Specific instructions

On the day of surgery, please arrive in Surgery Check-in area at \_\_\_\_\_. Your child should not have food or milk products after \_\_\_\_\_ and no breast milk after \_\_\_\_\_. Your child may have clear, non-carbonated liquids, such as water or apple juice, until \_\_\_\_\_. At that time, your child cannot have anything by mouth until after surgery. Do not give your child any medication the morning of surgery.