



University Hospitals Bristol
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service
Bristol Royal Hospital for Children

Practical ways to help your child prepare for a test or investigation



Respecting everyone
Embracing change
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Bristol Royal Hospital
For Children

When your child comes to hospital for a regular review of their health, they may be asked to have a blood test, scan or other type of investigation to monitor how well they are.

Some children may have questions and worries about what this will be like. They may have also had a test in the past that was difficult, and may worry it will be the same again.

This leaflet contains some ideas that may help to prepare you and your child.

Before the test or investigation

1. Explaining what will happen will help your child feel safe. Be honest with your child. Use words, pictures and films they understand and tell them:
 - what will happen and where
 - why they need to have it
 - who will be there.
2. Tell your child in advance, but not too far ahead. You will know your child best, but as a guide:
 - if your child is under six years old, tell them on the same day
 - if your child is over six years old, tell them two or three days before
 - if your child is over 12 years old, tell them far enough in advance that they can prepare.



3. Ask your medical team if pain relief would be helpful, then make sure your child is included in any decision making where possible.
4. Please tell your medical team if your child has any particular sensitivities, for example to noise, touch, light etc.



5. Make a plan with your child. Talk to them about:
 - what they would like to take with them to do whilst waiting (for example a favourite toy, a book, music, or tablet)
 - who they want there
 - whether they would like you to talk about what will happen next, or to be talked through what is happening, or to talk about something else
 - whether they would like to hold your hand, or look at what is going on
 - what they want to do afterwards (perhaps a treat or activity)
 - any other special requests (within reason).

During the test or investigation

Procedures and tests can be difficult. Please help our staff by preparing and working alongside them to ensure you and your child have the best possible experience.

1. Try to stay calm. It is important that you remain calm, as this will help your child feel safe. If you are finding this difficult, you could ask somebody else to be with your child during the test or investigation.
2. Use the plan that you made beforehand.
3. Let your child know that it is okay to make a noise; nobody minds if they cry or shout. Sometimes singing or counting can be helpful – you could even join in with them.
4. Give your child choices, such as where they sit, whether they hold your hand, whether they want to look at what is going on or not, and what they want to talk about at the time.
5. Ensure that only one person talks at a time (for example, the person doing the procedure can talk your child through it while you hold their hand and distract them).
6. Talk to your child about things that they are excited by, or allow them some quiet. Follow the plan you discussed beforehand.



After the test or investigation

1. Congratulate them when it is finished and focus on the positives.
2. Reward your child with hugs, a story or a song – leave them with a positive memory!
3. Let them know that it will all be okay if and when they have to do it again in the future.



Suggestions of clips and programmes for you and your child to watch

CBeebies 'Get Well Soon' is a series which covers a range of health-related topics including some tests and procedures:

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/get-well-soon

If a procedure is planned for a child for which they will need a general anaesthetic, you may find this link helpful:

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/your-hospitals/bristol-royal-hospital-for-children/childrens-website/operations-and-tests/going-to-theatre

If you would like some more suggestions about how to prepare your child for a test or procedure, you could watch:

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/helping-your-child-prepare-for-an-operation

For more information

For more information on how the children's hospital play department may be able to help your child, please see:

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/your-hospitals/bristol-royal-hospital-for-children/patient-support-services/play-centre

Notes

You could use this space to help you make a plan with your child.

Please note that if for any reason you would value a second opinion concerning your diagnosis or treatment, you are entirely within your rights to request this.

The first step would usually be to discuss this with the doctor or other lead clinician who is responsible for your care.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **Smokeyfree Bristol** on **0117 922 2255**.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While your child is under our care, you may be approached about them taking part in research. To find out more please visit: **www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation** or call the research and innovation team on **0117 342 0233**.

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/

Hospital switchboard: 0117 923 0000



Minicom: 0117 934 9869



www.uhbristol.nhs.uk



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please email patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk.

