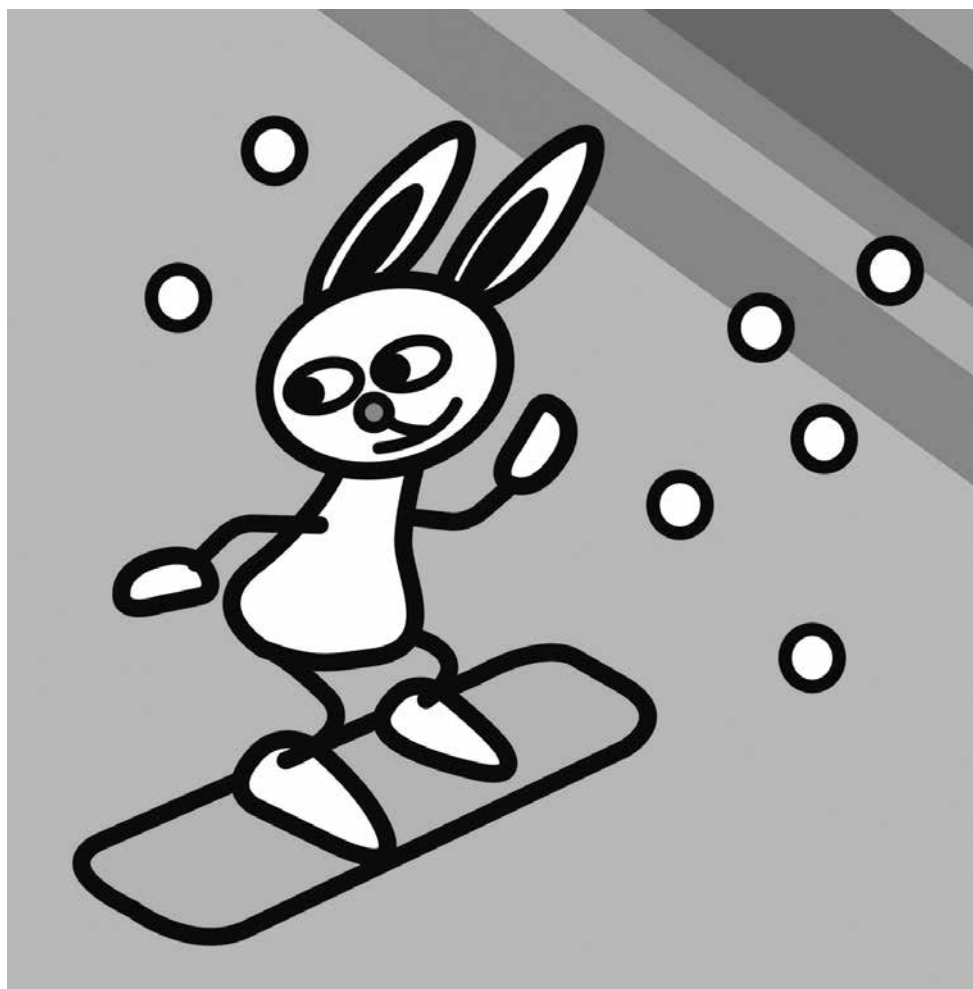


Therapy advice for children with complex needs having spinal surgery



Spinal surgery

Your child has been listed for spinal surgery following discussion with their Orthopaedic Team.

This leaflet will explain the kind of therapy you can expect your child to have after their operation, to help them recover as quickly as possible.

Preparation for your child's surgery

Occupational Therapy

In the run up to your child's surgery you will be asked to come to the pre-admission clinic. The nurses at this appointment will check your child is well enough to have the surgery and general anaesthetic. You will also meet the Occupational Therapy team. They will ask lots of questions about how your child and you currently manage, including how mobile they are; questions about school and their family; and what equipment you are using. They will discuss what your child's current care needs are, and whether you will require extra support when they are discharged from hospital.

If appropriate, they will arrange for your child's wheelchair to be reviewed either before they come into hospital, or after they have left hospital. If their wheelchair is not suitable for use after the surgery, you may be loaned a wheelchair from the Oxford Children's Hospital until your child's chair can be reviewed by the wheelchair service.

Physiotherapy

You are likely to already know your child's community physiotherapist. Please bring details of your child's local therapists to the pre-admission clinic appointment. This is important as it helps us to plan and arrange the support your child will need when they leave hospital.

If your child has been taught some specific breathing exercises by their local or specialist physiotherapist, we recommend that they practice these before coming in to hospital. This will help to prepare them for the anaesthetic and surgery by making sure their chest is in its best condition.

What to expect when your child comes to hospital for their surgery

Operation day: (Day zero)

You will need to bring your child to hospital on the morning of their surgery. Please go to the ward that is detailed in their admission letter. After your child has had their surgery, they will be transferred to the Paediatric High Dependency Unit (PHDU) where they will meet their named nurse.

Day after operation: (Day one)

Your child will be visited by the Orthopaedic Therapy team, who will support their rehabilitation and recovery after their surgery.

They will be seen by the Physiotherapist, who will check their breathing; they may listen to their chest and discuss any breathing techniques your child was using before the operation.

They will give you and your child advice and techniques to help them to breathe more comfortably. It is very important that you encourage your child to follow any advice that they are given, as this can help prevent respiratory complications, such as chest infections.

The nurses looking after your child will help them to roll regularly and change position so that they are comfortable.

Day one goal: To roll and change position regularly during the day, with help from the nurses.

Day two onwards

By day two, if they are well enough and there is space available, your child may have been transferred back to the ward. They will be visited by the Orthopaedic Therapy Team, who will go through some bed exercises both with you and your child. They will also hoist them out of bed in to a wheelchair.

Day two goal: To sit out of bed in an upright posture for up to 10 minutes.

Going home

We can arrange to discharge your child from hospital when we feel that they are well enough and when you and the Therapy Team are confident that you can maintain post-operative spinal precautions when hoisting and caring for them.

You will be encouraged to practice hoisting your child out of bed and in to their wheelchair regularly whilst they are in hospital. This will help them to build up their tolerance of sitting in their wheelchair.

Discharge goal: To be able to sit in their wheelchair for a set period of time, as discussed with the Therapists. This is likely to be at least the length of time needed for you to be able to travel home from the hospital.

The Occupational Therapist will give you advice on how to carry out washing, dressing and personal care with your child after their surgery. If you need any extra support at home, the Occupational Therapist can discuss this with the relevant teams in your area.

The Occupational Therapist will work with your child's local wheelchair service to arrange a review of their wheelchair. During this time, your child may be loaned a wheelchair from the Oxford Children's Hospital. You will need to return this to the Oxford Children's Hospital, once your child's own wheelchair has been adjusted.

General advice to help with returning to school/college:

Your child may find that they are more tired than usual while they are recovering from their surgery. They may wish to make a graded return to school, for example, starting with a half day and gradually increasing the time spent at school back to full days. We encourage your child to return to school as soon as they feel strong enough, as it can be a good distraction from any discomfort during their recovery.

Please speak to your child's teacher/tutor to ask if they can sit in a position in class where they can face straight forward and do not need to look over their shoulder or twist their spine.

Things to remember:

- Remember to tell your local therapists once your child has been given a date for surgery, so that they can plan their follow-up care.
- Bring up to date details of local therapist names, addresses and telephone numbers to the pre-admission clinic appointment or when coming to hospital. This is so that our hospital therapists can speak to them, to let them know about your child's surgery and recovery, as well as any specific information that they may need to know.

When coming to hospital don't forget to bring:

- loose comfortable clothes and toiletries
- wheelchair and slings so we can help your child to be hoisted out of bed as soon as they are comfortable to do so
- any portable respiratory equipment that your child routinely uses at home
- games and books to occupy your child. The ward will also have good selection of toys for your child to use.

If you, your child or their school or college have any specific questions about their recovery after surgery, please feel free to contact the Paediatric Therapy Department at the John Radcliffe Children's Hospital.

Tel: **01865 231 999** or **01865 234 001**
(8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

Paediatric Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy

This leaflet was produced by the Paediatric Orthopaedic Team
and Paediatric Neuromuscular Team

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter,
a document in Easy Read, another language, large print,
Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473**
or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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