

What to Tell Your Child Before Surgery

By Amy Bentley



Dr. David L. Gibbs
CHOC Children's
Pediatric Surgeon

Dr. Gibbs is a pediatric surgeon, president of the medical staff at CHOC Children's and the CHOC Children's Specialists Division Chief of Pediatric Surgery.

Dr. Gibbs completed his internship and residency at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, followed by fellowships in pediatric surgery at the UCSF Fetal Treatment Center in San Francisco, the Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Schneider Children's Hospital/Pediatric Surgery in New Hyde Park, New York, and the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada. His clinical interests include pediatric laparoscopic surgery and neonatal surgery.

Dr. Gibbs' philosophy of care: "When a child needs surgery, it can be just as scary for the parents as it is for the child. We treat the entire family with the greatest compassion and understanding."

EDUCATION:
Ohio State University

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:
Adult and Pediatric General Surgery

450,000

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 ADMITTED FOR SURGERY AS INPATIENTS ANNUALLY IN THE U.S.

3,591

NUMBER OF INPATIENT SURGERIES PERFORMED AT CHOC IN 2013 (ORANGE AND MISSION CAMPUSES)



Experts In: **Surgical Care** Learn more about preparing for your child's surgery at choc.org/health.

EASING FEARS

Parents should understand and work through their concerns, because if the parents are scared, the child will be scared; if the parents are calm, the child will be calm too, says Dr. David Gibbs, a CHOC Children's Pediatric Surgeon. "I try and listen to what the family has to say. I need to know what the family is afraid of and what is bothering them," Dr. Gibbs says. "I try to make the parents realize they are doing the right thing and we will help you through this." CHOC allows parents to stay with their child in their hospital room during the entire surgery hospitalization period but are not allowed in the operating room.

TIPS FOR SURGERY DAY

Dr. Gibbs recommends that parents have their hospital bag packed the night before surgery so they will arrive at the hospital on time. Also, parents should not eat in front of their child because the child won't be allowed to eat. "I recommend promising the child some kind of special treat or gift after the surgery. I think it's fine to say, 'After we go through this, we're going to get you some toy or thing you wanted and



celebrate you having gone through this.' Have the child bring a favorite blanket, special outfit, stuffed animal or toy, something that reminds him of home. It makes the child feel a little more comfortable."

GETTING YOUR CHILD ON BOARD

Preparing your child in advance and planning ahead for surgery will help make your child feel more comfortable about the surgery and recover better and faster, says Dr. Gibbs. "Don't plan a trip to Disneyland a week after the surgery. Do whatever it takes to make your child calm, relaxed and pain-free. This will help him heal better and faster and he will be more compliant. This is not just about making him feel better. It's about making him recover faster. If the child feels that he or she is a part of the experience with some degree of control, then they will get better faster."



Emergency Care Just for Kids

The Julia and George Argyros Emergency Department at CHOC Children's Hospital is exclusively dedicated to the treatment of pediatric patients. Our 22,000-square-foot, full-service emergency department is designed to meet the unique medical and emotional needs of children—from fragile newborns to sturdy teens. Our board-certified emergency medicine physicians and our specially trained nurses provide the very best patient- and family-centered care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Learn more at
choc.org/emergency



4,990

NUMBER OF OUTPATIENT SURGERIES PERFORMED AT CHOC IN 2013 (ORANGE AND MISSION CAMPUSES)