

Preparing and Helping Your Child Through Surgery

Written by Rachel Roland

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Rachel Roland is a mom on a mission - exploring beautiful Arizona (and beyond!) with her two little companions, Jeremiah and Sarah, in search of the best restaurants, attractions, and products for you and your children. See what she has in store for your family today!



No parent wants to hear that their child needs to have surgery - no matter how minor - but this is something my family recently experienced and I wanted to share it with you. I want to reassure and help any parents out there who might be facing something similar in the future.

Pre-Op

Sarah needed her tonsils and adenoids removed, as well as her frenulum clipped because she was tongue tied. This procedure required anesthesia as well as an overnight stay in the hospital. Before her surgery, we talked a lot about how she'd be going to the hospital and going to sleep and waking up with a sore throat. Because she's only 3, I'm not sure how much this helped, but at I think it was good to talk to her about it. At Phoenix Children's Hospital, where Sarah's surgery was, they actually have a program where a Child Life Specialist can take you on a tour of the hospital to let your child become familiar with the hospital as well as the medical equipment that will be used. If your procedure is at a different hospital, I'd call and see if they have a similar program. (PCH also offers a [great online resource for preparing for surgery.](#))

There were several things that I was anxious about pre-op for Sarah - first, the whole 'no food or water after midnight' - my baby loves to eat, and I was worried she be a mess by the time her 10am surgery rolled around. So, I actually woke her up at 1130pm and had her drink some milk and have a little snack. Thankfully, she went back to sleep without a problem, and the next morning was in a great mood, to my surprise. The next issue I was so anxious about was when she left for surgery, that she'd be afraid because we couldn't walk back to the operating room with her. I think for some surgeries they give the kids a medicine to make them sleepy before they take them back, but due to how swollen Sarah's tonsils were, she went back fully awake. It was hard to walk away from her, but the staff at PCH are all so kind and loving, and I knew they'd take excellent care of her.



Post-Op

Sarah's particular procedure was simple and over quickly - it was over in less than 30 minutes. Once the surgery is over, you wait for awhile (we waited 40 minutes) while your child is moved to the recovery area and wakes up from the anesthesia. We asked to be taken back before we were called, and when we arrived, Sarah was still under anesthesia. I feel like I should share how odd and helpless it was to see my daughter laying on a hospital bed, being tended to by a very sweet nurse holding an oxygen mask over Sarah's face. I have heard experiences from other parents that their children woke up inconsolable and screaming after surgery and I had prepared myself to face that possibility. Thankfully, after Sarah woke up, she went to sleep on her own.

After we moved to her room, and met her day nurse (Amy) and another staff member (Sid) who would be helping us out. And trust me, I utilized them A LOT. I asked questions, asked for help, asked them for toys, etc. They were incredibly helpful, and loved Sarah like she was their own child. Our night nurse, Jen, was an angel who patiently and lovingly administered Sarah's pain medicine throughout the night, and in spite of Sarah's thrashing and kicking during the process.



Be prepared to see your child at their worst and you at your most helpless. During the night, Sarah refused all water, juice, ice cream, and other treats that normally she'd jump at the chance to have. I don't think I'll ever forget begging Sarah to eat a small bite of chocolate ice cream at 12:30am and her refusing. This is where the nurses are so important - they can help you by showing you different tricks to try to get them to eat

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and drink, and they'll bring you almost anything you can think of to help your child. Amy was so sweet and loving - and she treated Jeremiah just as nicely as she treated the rest of us. Sometimes siblings get pushed aside when a child is sick, but Amy made sure Jeremiah didn't feel forgotten or neglected.



We're home now, and Sarah's eating and drinking as normally as she can, which I'm very thankful for. I'm looking forward to seeing this silly goofy girl again. I hope our experience helps you in some small way, and I'm here if you have questions! I have to say "Thank You!" to Amy, Sid, and Jen, and if you know a nurse, Sunday May 6th is National Nurses Day - show them your appreciation!



I'm Rachel - a mom, wife, and 'green' blogger at [Small Steps On Our Journey](#). If you want me to come visit your place of business, have any questions on this article or suggestions for a future article, you can email me at rroland@azfoothills.com or tweet me at [@rachelroland](#).