

John Atwell children's day ward

Information for patients, families and carers



Welcome to John Atwell

The John Atwell children's day ward is part of our paediatric services department in Southampton.



Based on G level of Southampton Children's Hospital, it is equipped with eight beds or cots and cares for children undergoing a wide variety of medical and surgical procedures.

Children are encouraged to use our play area, which is supervised by a play specialist.

As well as toys and books for all ages from one month to 16 years, we have televisions, videos and electronic games including a Game Boy, Xbox and Playstation 2.

Before admission

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to keep your child's appointment by telephoning **023 8120 6766/6876** between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

If your child develops a temperature, cough, cold or other illness before their admission, please phone us on 023 8120 6157 and ask for advice. Wherever possible, please arrange for someone else to look after your other children during the day or when they come out of school. Babies are welcome on the ward but please bring your own feeds and nappies.

If you cannot come in with your child, the person bringing him or her

must have a letter from you giving them permission to act on your child's behalf (such as for signing of the consent form). Please make sure we have a telephone number on which we can speak to you during your child's admission.

Occasionally, we have to cancel admissions at short notice due to an emergency and we apologise where this cannot be avoided. If this happens, we will make every effort to reschedule your child's treatment as soon as possible.

What to bring

- If your child is having an operation, a nightdress, pyjamas or other loose fitting clothes to wear on the journey home
- Your child's favourite toy, cuddly toy or dummy
- An empty beaker or milk feed if used
- Any medicines your child is taking or has used recently
- Your child's health record book
- Your income support book if you would like help with your fares to and from hospital
- A packed lunch for yourself (please ask the nurse before you eat or drink on the ward as we try to avoid upsetting children who are nil by mouth before their procedure)
- If possible bring a tablet/laptop/ game to play with for keeping your child occupied.

Preparing your child

Being prepared helps children cope with coming into hospital. You can help by giving simple, honest explanations to your child about why they are coming in and what will happen.

It is also a good idea to bring your child to the pre-admission programme held on the ward on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month.

This programme includes a presentation and visit to our theatre recovery area, and is equally appropriate and informative for parents and children of all ages.

Eating and drinking before a general anaesthetic

You will be sent separate instructions for your child's specific procedure. It is very important that you follow these carefully, even if it means waking your child to allow them to have an early morning drink.

We ask you not to give any food or drink outside these times for your child's safety during the procedure and for their comfort during recovery.

Going without food and drink for longer periods may slow recovery from anaesthetics and leave your child more likely to be sick on waking. Eating and drinking after the instructed times may result in the procedure being delayed or even cancelled.

Getting here

Please arrange your own transport to and from the hospital but do not use public transport to take your child home after a general anaesthetic.

The John Atwell children's day ward is on G level, Centre Block, Southampton Children's Hospital. The reception desk staff in the main hospital entrance area can give you directions or a volunteer guide may be able to escort you.

What happens on arrival

Your child will be met by a nurse, who will check his or her weight, temperature, pulse and breathing rate, and go through the plan for the day.

A doctor or nurse will then take a brief medical history and check that your child is well enough to have

the procedure. If you need to sign a consent form, a doctor will explain this to you first.

If your child is having a blood test, drip or anaesthetic, the nurse may put numbing cream on to the back of one or both of their hands and cover it with a dressing.



Going to the operating theatre or scanning room

Your nurse will be able to tell you where your child is on the list. If there is any delay – for example, if the surgeon has to deal with an emergency – he or she will keep you informed.

When it is your child's turn, he or she will be given a colourful operating gown to wear.

Your nurse will escort your child to the theatre complex or scanning room. Parents are welcome to accompany their child to the reception area.

One parent can go into the anaesthetic room and stay until your child is asleep. We will give you a gown and hat to wear. Parents of children under one are not usually allowed into the anaesthetic room.

Your child will have their general anaesthetic either through an injection in the back of their hand or using gas – the anaesthetist will advise. He or she may also have a local anaesthetic to numb the area being operated on and other painkillers.

During and after the operation or scan

Your child may be away from the ward for a while. Many parents use this time to have a break and get a drink or meal from one of the hospital's shops or restaurants. After the procedure, you may accompany your nurse to be with your child when returning to the ward.

Your child will need between one and three hours rest after returning to the ward – either on their bed or on your lap.

When your child is awake properly, your nurse will give him or her a drink. Please do not give anything to your child yourself.

Going home

Usually, children are able to go home between one and three hours after their procedure.

Before you leave you may not always be seen by a doctor prior to discharge. Your nurse will hand you a discharge letter and advise what to expect during your child's recovery, as well as any after care, including painkillers and when they may be given. Your nurse will also arrange for you to have a follow up appointment with the consultant.

It is a good idea to have some paracetamol and Nurofen syrup or tablets at home. Any other medication needed will be provided by the hospital.

For some children, a post-operative visit by a children's community nurse may be needed. If appropriate, this will be arranged by your nurse.

Any questions

We are always happy to answer your questions. If there is anything you would like to know, please ask when you visit or phone our ward staff on 023 8120 6157.



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If you need a translation of this document,
an interpreter or a version in large print,
Braille or on audio tape, please telephone
023 8120 4688 for help.