We understand that surgery can be a stressful experience for families. The PP (Parental Presence) program allows a parent or other support person to stay with a child or teen for the start of anesthesia.

What are the benefits of PP?
Supporting your child or teen in the operating room may reduce anxiety and helps to make everyone's experience more positive.

Who can take part?
Going with a child into the OR for the start of anesthesia is not for everyone or every situation. You don’t have to take part in this program if you would rather not. Your child’s safety is our first priority, and sometimes Parental Presence may not be suitable. The anesthesiologist caring for your child is responsible for making the final decision and will decide if this program is right for you. Please remember that just one parent or support person can go with your child into the OR.

To take part in PP:
- Patients must be at least one year old;
- Patients must be medically stable;
- Patients must want a parent to be with them;
- Patients must not have complex medical needs;
- The surgery must be scheduled ahead of time (no emergency surgery, as a staff person must be available to stay with you).

We may not be able to offer this PP option if we do not have a volunteer or Child Life Specialist available.

The anesthesiologist has the final decision about whether this program is right for you.

What can I expect in the OR?
If the anesthesiologist has agreed that you and your child can take part in PP, a staff member or hospital volunteer will stay with you for support.
When you arrive in the OR:
- We will give you a gown, hat, mask, and shoe covers to wear;
- You will meet the OR team (surgeons, anesthesiologist, and nurses);
- We will explain everything that is happening;
- We will bring you back to the OR entrance when you leave the room.

As children and youth become sleepy from anesthesia, some close their eyes and fall asleep smoothly. Others enter a stage of excitement where they may move their arms or legs. Some may seem dizzy, with noisy breathing or coughing, and you may notice their eyes roll back. All of this is very normal. Your child or teen will not remember this stage.

Remember—The OR is a sterile area. Please don’t touch anything without permission.
How long can I stay with my child?

This is always up to the OR team.

You may stay in the OR until the anesthesiologist asks you to leave. We may ask parents of teens to leave the room once their teen is lying comfortably on the OR bed.

A staff member or volunteer will walk you out of the room and bring you back to the OR front area.

Some people feel uncomfortable once they arrive in the OR. Please tell us right away if you don’t feel well.

In the OR, you will help the most when you:

- Allow your child or teen to go to the OR on her own if she wants;
- Hold your child’s hand gently;
- Sing or talk to your child in a soothing, quiet voice;
- Try not to ask your child too many questions as he is going to sleep.

Want more info?

For more detailed information about surgery at CHEO, visit the Surgery Virtual Tour at: www.cheo.on.ca

Click on the icon in the scrolling banner at the bottom of the page.