

The Regional Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery

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Dear Patients and Families,

Your recent pediatric neurosurgical appointment has lead to the consideration of neurosurgery for yourself/your child. The pediatric neurosurgery service is dedicated to providing quality care to all the patients for whom we care in the Northern California Region. The following step-by-step guideline is designed to make you/your child's surgical experience as stress-free and informative as possible.

DECISION FOR SURGERY/SURGERY PRIORITIZATION:

Once the decision has been made to proceed with surgery scheduling, the neurosurgeon with whom you/your child's surgery was discussed will complete a surgery request form. Upon its completion, you/your child's surgery will be prioritized based on the following three categories:

1. **Emergent**—the neurosurgeon has indicated the surgery should be scheduled within the next 1-2 weeks.
2. **Urgent**—the neurosurgeon has indicated the surgery should be scheduled within the next 3-4 weeks.
3. **Elective**--the neurosurgeon has specified that the surgery can be performed on the *next available operating day* based on the elective case schedule. Generally, elective surgeries are scheduled about 2 to 4 months ahead.

IMPORTANT: Urgent/Elective cases may need to be cancelled and rescheduled to accommodate the scheduling of an emergent surgery. We will try to avoid this whenever possible, but cancellations sometimes cannot be avoided.

Our administrative specialist, Lily An, will contact you/your family to schedule the surgery. If you prefer, you may contact Lily directly at (510) 752-1759. Lily manages the surgery calendar for the neurosurgeons and will inform you of the next available *tentative* date for surgery.

Our social worker, Carmen Luk MSW, will assist you in navigating through the Kaiser system and can provide assistance in managing any psychosocial concerns that arise for you/your family during the course of your treatment with our service. She also acts as an intermediary linking you/your family with available Kaiser and community resources and is an integral part of the team providing care to you/your family and is a valuable resource in communicating your questions/concerns to appropriate members of our team. She can be contacted directly at (510) 752-1771.

EMERGENT SURGERY

Please understand that our pediatric neurosurgery service aims to provide the highest quality care to all of the patients for whom we care in the Northern California Region. Because of the nature of pediatric neurosurgery, all surgeries are scheduled on a *tentative* basis. The *tentative* surgery date reserves the surgery slot for you/your child, and we will make every effort to precede with surgery on the reserved date. However, if a patient who presents to us requires **emergent** surgery, the neurosurgeon may need to reschedule your/your child's surgery to a later date.



We appreciate that rescheduling a surgical procedure can be a hardship for you/your family, and we will try our best to accommodate your schedule during the rescheduling process.

PRE-SURGERY/PRE-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Once the *tentative* surgery date has been established, Lily will also coordinate your/your child's Pre-Surgery and Pre-Operative clinic appointments. These appointments will take place approximately one week prior to the *tentatively* scheduled surgery date. Since many of our patients and their families are traveling from great distances, we generally attempt to schedule these appointments for the same day. These two appointments are scheduled to allow you/your family ample time to travel to and from appointments. A map is attached for your reference.

The Pre-Surgery clinic appointment will be at the Kaiser Oakland Hospital on the first/main floor in the Pre-Surgery Department. The address is 280 West MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94611. The telephone number is (510) 752-7740. The Pre-Surgery clinic appointment entails lab work and a consultation with the pre-surgery nurses to learn how to prepare for the day of surgery.

The Pre-Operative clinic appointment will be scheduled with one of our three physician assistants, Matthew Smith, Dawn Resney-Deems or Linda Villarreal or our Nurse Practitioner Erica Faafiu. It will be done at our office in the Broadway Medical Office Building located at 3701 Broadway, Suite 105, Oakland, CA 94611. The Pre-Operative clinic appointment includes a history & physical examination, which is required to ensure you /your child, is healthy enough to undergo the surgery. The appointment also provides an opportunity to address any concerns or questions you/your family may still have, regarding the surgery.

To further prepare for surgery, you/your family can schedule an appointment with our social worker, Carmen, who can give you/your family a tour of the hospital and address the psychosocial aspects of surgery & hospitalization. This can be coordinated for the same day with the Pre-Surgery & Pre Operative appointments so you/your family will not need to make a separate trip.

ANESTHESIA AND SICK PATIENTS

Please notify our office immediately if you/your child are sick within 2-3 weeks of the *tentative* surgery date. Due to very strict anesthesia protocols, if a patient has been ill or has any fever or coughing or running nose or congestion, we cannot proceed with the surgery. The surgery would then be rescheduled when the patient has recovered. The anesthesiologists generally insist that patients be free of all symptoms for a minimum of three weeks before rescheduling the surgery. This is done as a precaution to minimize the possibility of the patient's developing pneumonia or other complications.

SURGERY CANCELLATIONS

Owing to the large population of patients for whom we provide pediatric neurosurgical care, there is always a waiting list of patients wanting to schedule urgent and elective surgical cases. If, for any reason, you feel you will not be able to proceed with your *tentatively* scheduled surgery date, please contact Lily An as soon as possible, so the date can be released to another waiting patient.

We hope this overview has been helpful. We appreciate the opportunity to care for you/your child. Please feel free to contact our department if you have any questions. Our main office telephone number is (510) 752-1749.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Each of us in PNS has chosen to be here. Each of us is dedicated to helping children who have been touched by a serious, often life-threatening, illness. We come together every day to make our patients' lives better. We are passionate about helping children heal. We hope this letter will help prepare you for



you or your child's upcoming surgery. If at any point you feel that we either exceeded or not met our goal of exceptional care please inform any staff member that you would like to speak to me or you can also contact me directly.

Thank you for choosing Kaiser Permanente and the Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Oakland to care for you or your child.

Sincerely,

James Mitchell, RN, MSN, PNP

TPMG Service Manager

Pediatric Neurosurgery

(510) 752-1749

james.b.mitchell@kp.org

