Additional Preparation Tips and Guidelines

- If your child is 3 years or younger, tell him/her about the surgery the day before. Younger children do not have a concept of time and telling them too far in advance may cause unneeded anxiety.
- If your child is 4 or older, tell him/her about the surgery one to two weeks prior as you see fit.
- Use concrete terms.
- Answer questions as they come up. Be careful about providing more details than necessary.
- Make the surgery trip something to look forward to by promising a small toy afterward.
- Emphasize that no other body part will be involved.
- If the body part is associated with a specific function, stress the change or the noninvolvement of that function (e.g., after a tonsillectomy the child can still talk).
- Use words that are appropriate to the child's level of understanding.
- · Avoid words or phrases with dual meanings.
- Clarify all unfamiliar terms.
- Emphasize the sensory aspect of the procedure what the child will feel, see, smell, touch and hear.
- Introduce anxiety-producing information last (for example, an injection).
- Be honest about the unpleasant aspects of the procedure, but avoid creating undue concern (for example, "Your throat will hurt, but you will get medicine to make it feel better").
- Stress the positive benefits of the procedure (for example, "After your tonsils are fixed, you won't have as many sore throats").