

Coming for a cardiac catheter

When cardiac catheterisation has been recommended for your child, there are several tasks which need to be completed to make sure your child is ready for their procedure. Depending on how urgently your child needs to have their procedure, these tasks may need to be arranged in a short period of time (days) or over a longer period (months).

The information below is designed to help you plan and prepare for your child's cardiac catheter, including booking your travel/accommodation, admission to hospital, your hospital stay, discharge and follow-up appointments.

Catheter booking dates and preparation

Your child's procedure date will depend on a few different considerations including:

- how urgently they need a cardiac catheter
- the type of catheter they need
- the specialist skills needed by their doctor to perform the procedure.

You will usually be called by the catheter coordinator in the month before your booked catheter date. This will give you and your child enough time to plan and prepare for the procedure. It will also give the Cardiology team performing the catheter procedure enough time to prepare and make any necessary changes to scheduled booking dates because of emergencies, illness etc.

Rescheduling and short notice availability

We understand that having your booked procedure date cancelled is inconvenient and can even be distressing for you and your family. We do our best to keep scheduled appointments set to their original date, however, cannot always guarantee this. Please keep in mind that the Queensland Children's Hospital is a tertiary paediatric cardiac centre, which means that we service the entire state of Queensland and Northern New South Wales. Children are seen according to how urgently they need to have their catheter procedure and at times this will mean that emergency cases are seen first, and other scheduled procedures need to be pushed back. This can result in a change to your child's scheduled treatment date and time. If your booking is cancelled, we will let you know as soon as possible and reschedule it in a timely manner.

Booked procedures can be cancelled/rescheduled for a number of reasons including:

- emergency cases
- bed shortages
- technical problems
- more required tests
- illness.

If you live within the greater Brisbane area, we can place you on the 'Short notice availability list'. This gives you the opportunity to come into the hospital for a preadmission clinic at short notice and then return the following day (it is usually a 24hr turn-around-time) for your child's procedure. We understand that this may not be convenient or possible for everyone, however, if you feel as though this option will work for your family, please let us know.

If your child becomes unwell with cold or flu symptoms, an infection, febrile illness, or a rash in the month before their catheter or pre-admission appointment, please notify the catheter coordinator on

07 3068 1765 or the cardiac bookings office on
07 3068 4306 (during business hours).

Admission planning

The catheter coordinator will be in touch with you to start planning your child's hospital admission. They will talk you through arranging a pre-admission appointment (this will take place in the two weeks before your child's catheter procedure) and discuss your child's condition including any specific needs or medical requirements they might have.

Your child's care team will then complete a care plan and begin coordinating other health teams in the lead up to the procedure where necessary.

Your catheter coordinator can also suggest certain services that may help your family prepare for your child's procedure.

Finally, we will send you information about the hospital admission process either by post or by email. Please make sure you read this information as it will give you a better understanding of the catheter admission process and help you prepare.

For information about your healthcare options please visit the [Public or private page](#) on our website.



If you wish for us to electronically transfer your child's private patient information and appointment dates outside of Children's Health Queensland (e.g., to your GP), you will need to complete a 'Consent for email form'. This can be sent out to you via email, or you can complete one at the Cardiac Clinic.

Pre-admission clinic

Before your child has their catheter, they will attend a pre-admission clinic appointment with the catheter coordinator. These appointments are scheduled from a Monday to Thursday and take about 2–3 hours to complete. During your appointment the cardiac catheter procedure will be discussed with you and your child, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you might have. Any further tests (e.g. blood tests) that need to be done before your child's procedure will also be arranged.

The pre-admission clinic also involves discussing hygiene preparation in detail. This is a very important safety step in the catheter process. To assist with the hygiene steps, we have listed the tasks below:

- Have a shower or bath the night before and the day of the procedure.
- Please use soap generously and pay attention to the neck folds, groin, umbilicus, groin, perianal and anal region.
- After the shower or bath, wipe dry with a clean towel (freshly washed).
- After the second shower or bath in the morning, put on fresh clothes; loose-fitting, comfortable or sleepwear is the best. You are free to wear underwear/boxer shorts.
- **Do not wear clothing with metal clips/zippers/studs or buttons.**
- **Do not wear bras, sports bras, or singlets.**
- **Do not apply creams, oils, deodorant/perfumes/talc or makeup on your skin after your showers or baths.**
- Remove all jewellery and piercings.
- Remove nail polish from finger and toenails.

Your child will not be admitted to hospital on the day of their pre-admission clinic appointment. If you and your child have travelled to attend your pre-admission appointment you will need to organise your own private accommodation or stay with friends or family.

IMPORTANT: Do not bring your child to the cardiac specialty clinic if they are unwell. Please contact your catheter coordinator first on **07 3068 1765** or the Cardiac Specialist Clinic reception on **07 3068 2790** if you have any concerns or questions.

If your child becomes unwell the night before their appointment date (after hours) please notify us by calling the hospital switchboard on **07 3068 1111** (24/7). Ask for the patient flow manager and explain your situation, including your admission booking for a cardiac catheter in the morning

Travelling and staying for families from rural and remote areas

Families who live more than 50km from the referring hospital are eligible for travel and accommodation assistance under the [Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme \(PTSS\)](#).

There is also information about [assistance for families](#) available including The Welfare Service, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and Interpreter Services.

For more information, please visit the [Going to Hospital](#) page.

Please note: In 10b (Cardiac Ward) there is accommodation for **only one parent** to stay at their child's bedside.

We do our best to make sure that families from regional areas can have their preadmission appointment and hospital admission in the same trip. Despite our best efforts, this is not always possible because of conflicting clinical priorities.

Going to the dentist

Before your child has their procedure, they may be required to get an oral health clearance letter from the dentist. This means that you will need to book a dentist appointment for them to make sure their mouth is free from infection and dental caries. It is best to book your child's dentist appointment as soon as your catheter coordinators discuss this with you. That way there will be enough time for the dentist to do any work necessary without having to push your procedure date back.

The reason your child will need to have dental clearance is to reduce the risk of bacteria from the mouth entering the bloodstream and travelling to the heart which could cause an infection called [Infective Endocarditis](#).

If your child has visited a dentist in the past 6 months, your dentist can supply a letter clearly stating that your child is orally fit for their procedure, rather than having to go in for another check-up.

We will provide you with instructions to give to your dentist about how to complete your child's oral health clearance letter.

Please follow your cardiologist's medical advice about giving your child prophylactic antibiotics before their dental treatment. If you are NOT sure of your child's needs, please call your GP or the Cardiology Outpatient Department.



What to bring with you to hospital

Babies

- There is no need to bring any nappies or wipes as you will be provided with these.
- Clothes for your baby that zip or button up at the front are the best for after the operation so that the wound can easily be accessed.
- 'Onesie' suits/rompers that have fold back feet and clips which allow for monitoring equipment to be easily placed and checking wound sites in the groin without having to undress your baby every hour.
- Socks to keep your baby warm.
- If your baby takes a bottle and is fussy with the teat, we recommend that you bring in your own bottles and teats.
- Comforters may be bought in but must be washed prior to coming in.

Breastfeeding Mothers

We understand that it can be particularly stressful and confusing for breastfeeding mothers to know what to do when their baby is coming for a procedure. For information about what to expect and how to prepare please see the [Breastfeeding a baby with a cardiac condition fact sheet](#).

Big kids

- Children find that short sleeved, button up tops are the most comfortable tops for negotiating peripheral IV cannulas, monitoring equipment and wound site checks.
- Comfortable bottoms.
- Dressing gown or loose long sleeve jacket as it can be cool on the ward.
- Underwear including socks.
- Toiletries – toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, hairbrush.
- Slippers/slip on shoes.
- Comfort toys, pillows, blankets may be brought in but must be washed prior to coming in.
- Entertainment activities.

Parents

- We recommend you bring something warm to wear on the ward as it can get cold.
- You may wish to bring your own pillow.

For information about staying in the hospital please see the [Staying in the hospital as an inpatient page](#).

What to expect on the day of your child's catheter procedure

On the day of your child's procedure, you will need to make your way to the surgical admissions lounge (4b) on level 4 (blue level) of the hospital and follow the steps below:

- Please bring your appointment letters/emails with you to assist in the admission process.
- Go to the glass windows and let the surgical admissions staff know you have arrived.
- Complete your child's admission forms if you haven't already completed them at the preadmission.
- Once the admissions process is complete, there may be a wait before other assessments can take place. The surgical admissions staff will make sure you are in the right place for each assessment. You will be asked a range of questions related to your child's habits, behaviour, and lifestyle, as well as specific questions about their current health status and illness journey. You are welcome to stay by your child's side while these observations are being carried out (e.g., Heart rate, blood pressure, temperature).
- Your anaesthetist will come and speak to you about their role in the procedure and give you a consent form to read through and sign.
- Your anaesthetist may also prescribe some medication for your child to take before their procedure. Please let the anaesthetist know if you have any questions about this at all.
- There will be a delay before your child has their procedure, so it's a good idea to bring a few things to keep yourself and your child occupied. Our Children's Hospital Foundation volunteers and other charity partners also drop in regularly to keep children entertained while they are waiting.
- When it is time for your procedure, you and your child may be instructed to move to another area.
- One parent or carer can go with their child into the Catheter Lab. You will be provided you with a gown and hat to wear if you choose to accompany them into the lab.
- During the catheter procedure you will be able to wait in one of the parent lounges, or wherever you feel most comfortable. You are welcome to leave the hospital if you wish as the catheter procedure can take a couple of hours to complete.

Please note: Your child's doctor will need to speak with you after the procedure. Please make sure your mobile phone is turned on so that you don't miss their call.

Transfer from another health facility for parents of new babies

If you have a new baby with a heart condition, they may need to be transferred to the Queensland Children's Hospital to have a cardiac catheter procedure and other necessary tests.

If your baby's heart condition was picked up while you were pregnant, you may have already taken a tour of the Queensland Children's Hospital. If you have not had a tour the cardiac team will do their best to make sure you are familiar with the hospital once, you have been transferred.



If your baby is scheduled to have a cardiac catheter the catheter coordinator will visit you once, you have been transferred. The catheter coordinator will give you some written information to keep and you will be able to ask them any questions you may have.

Once transferred to the Queensland Children's Hospital, your baby will either be admitted to the Cardiac ward (10b) or Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). The ward they are admitted to will depend on the level of care they need before their catheter procedure.

After the catheter procedure

After your child receives their catheter, they will be cared for by several different teams of specialist doctors and nurses. Straight after their procedure is finished your child will be moved into the Recovery Room (Paediatric Acute Care Unit – PACU). This is where recovery staff will monitor and manage how your child is doing. Then, once your child is fully awake, they will be transferred to the Cardiac Ward (10b) or the Day Unit (4c).

Once your child is transferred onto the ward or into the day unit they will need to stay in bed, lying flat and being quiet for 4-6 hours after the catheter procedure. This is to try and stop them from getting any major bruising, swelling and/or bleeding where the catheter was inserted.

Nursing staff will check on the catheter site regularly during the first few hours after your child arrives on the ward to make sure everything is ok and record their observations. Your child will also have an intravenous access line inserted before they arrive on the ward so that their medication can be given. This will be removed before they are discharged from hospital.

Your child will only be discharged when it is medically safe for them to go home. This is usually either the same as their catheter procedure or the day after. Before you and your child go home, you may need to get some tests done (e.g., chest x-ray, echocardiogram) and complete a recommended medication plan. Then, once a cardiac doctor checks on your child and is satisfied that they are doing well enough to go home you will be discharged from hospital.

Going home

It is important that you feel comfortable to care for your child at home after they have been discharged from hospital. To help make sure you feel ready, we will work with you to start planning for this while your child is still an inpatient.

Some children may need to have their medication dosages adjusted or start taking new medication after a cardiac catheter e.g., Aspirin. If your child needs to start taking a new medication you will be seen by a pharmacist before you get discharged so that they can discuss this with you.

After discharge

The catheter coordinator will make a follow-up phone call within a week of your child's catheter procedure. This is to see how you went with removing the dressing, how the wound is healing, whether you have noticed any side effects from the medication, and to check in on your child's general wellness and activity levels.

A cardiology follow-up review appointment will also be organised after your child's catheter procedure. The catheter coordinator will call to confirm the date of this appointment with you.

Families from rural and remote areas

We will always try to time your follow-up appointments so that they match up with your Cardiologist's scheduled visit to your local area. This can be difficult, but in general you should not have to return to the Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane for your follow-up appointment.

