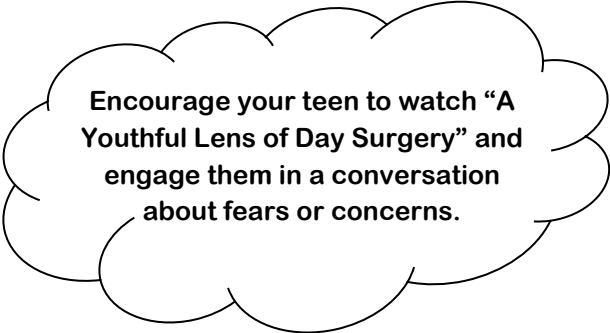


Supporting Teens Through the Surgery Experience

What might my teen be worried about?

Surgery is a stressful experience, and this is true for teens as well. Often older school age children and teens may feel concerned about:

- **Dependence on Caregivers:** Teens often have established independence in many ways. Surgery and its recovery can require them to rely on others for things they have previously been able to do independently. This can be a significant source of stress.
- **Separation from home, friends and school.** Often, teens speak about their worries, concerns and fear with peers and rely on them for emotional support. For recoveries that require an extended hospital stay, maintaining these connections can be challenging.
- **Invasions of their privacy:** teens are at a point in development where experiencing privacy is very important to them.
- **Their body image** This is especially true if the surgery will result in a visible difference
- **Pain** Typically post operative pain, is a source of stress before surgery.



Encourage your teen to watch “A Youthful Lens of Day Surgery” and engage them in a conversation about fears or concerns.

What are ways to support your child at home?

- Encourage your child to write down questions or concerns. Journaling or other methods of expressing emotion is a helpful coping strategy
- Include friends and family when possible, through visits to hospital or home, but ask your teen first.
- Peer support can be helpful—connect your child to Upopolis™, a social networking site for youth with health care needs or visit the Pediatric Family Resource Centre.



Things to bring that may be helpful:

- A cellphone, tablet or other hand-held device
- A charging cord for that device and headphones
- Stress relievers like a stress ball, fidget toy or mindfulness app
- Activities that take concentration (like adult colouring)
- Socks and slippers
- Comfortable, loose clothing

How Can I Support my Child?

- Involve your teen in medical decisions
- Encourage your teen to ask questions, about the hospital, the procedure and answer questions honestly
- Respect your teens privacy
- Encourage independence whenever possible
- Provide choices and communicate honestly
- Encourage relaxation techniques
- Help your teen stay connected with their friends and family