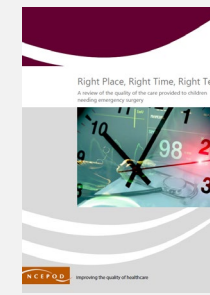


The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) is a charity that works to make healthcare services better for the people who use them. We do this by collecting information from people who have used healthcare services. Our work has led to lots of positive changes in how healthcare is provided.

We collected information from hospitals to see how care was provided to children and young people who needed emergency or urgent surgery.



For more information please see:
[THE FULL NCEPOD REPORT](#)
[OUR USEFUL RESOURCES PAGE](#)

WHAT WE FOUND

Hospitals commonly work together to share services and make sure that if someone arrives at a hospital where a particular condition can not be treated, a transfer can be arranged to the nearest hospital that can. These are called **clinical networks**, and while they usually worked well, sometimes they could have been better, as not everyone knew who to call or how to arrange the transfer.

In hospitals where emergency surgery is provided, there is usually someone, known as an **emergency surgery co-ordinator** who knows what operations are happening, and where, at any point in time. This way they can make sure the people who need surgery the soonest can get it. However, not every hospital had one, and we showed that care was better when they did.

When children come to hospital for urgent or emergency surgery, sometimes it is better to wait for some hours, or even until the next day if the condition is not life-threatening. Usually, people will be asked to **stop eating and drinking** before surgery, and we found that sometimes, because the surgery time was not fixed, people went too long without eating or drinking.

WHAT HEALTH SERVICES CAN DO

Make sure that networks exist and they are formalised and communicated to all members of the team.

Have at least one emergency surgery co-ordinator in place to ensure that children and young people needing emergency surgery can access a theatre.

Make sure children and young people who are waiting for emergency surgery are not fasted for any longer than necessary.

WHAT YOU AS A PATIENT/CARER CAN DO

If you are the patient or parent/carer of an unwell child, seek medical attention through your GP, NHS111 or 999, unless you are already under hospital care and know which hospital to go to.

At the hospital you could ask:

- ❓ **Does this hospital have the necessary experience and specialist support to safely and appropriately treat me/my child here, or will a transfer to a specialist hospital be required?**
- ❓ **How long should I/we expect to wait for surgery?**
- ❓ **Can I/my child drink until I/they go for surgery?**
- ❓ **Can I/we go home while waiting for the surgery?**

No question is too small or unimportant. The healthcare team wants to help you understand your admission to hospital and feel confident about your care. If you don't understand something, please keep asking until you do.