

# My visit to Pre-Admission Clinic



Developed by the  
**Child Life Therapy** Department  
The Children's Hospital At Westmead



## Note for families

*Talking with your child before surgery can help them to cope with the experience by knowing what to expect. The hospital environment has many unfamiliar sights, sounds, smells, people and procedures, and these can feel confusing or worrying for a child. In these situations, if not provided with honest, accurate and age appropriate information, a child may invent their own explanations or scenarios and these may be more frightening for them than the reality. Research has shown preparation that is sensitive to a child's age and stage can lower anxiety levels and lead to fewer emotional challenges after discharge.*

*Reading this book with your child will support them to gain an understanding of what they will see, hear and experience during their visit to Pre-Admission Clinic. Depending on your child's age, you may choose to just look and talk about the pictures with them or if they are older, read all of the text. You can support your child by encouraging them to talk about what they see, ask questions and discuss how they are feeling.*

*If you are not sure how to respond to your child's questions or would like further advice about age-appropriate ways to prepare them for their upcoming visit or surgery please contact the **Child Life Therapy department on (02) 9845 2669.***



## Support for Families

*There is a team of specialists at the Heart Centre for Children who are dedicated to providing emotional care and support to infants, children and families at any stage following a diagnosis of heart disease.*

*This team includes clinical nurse consultants, child life therapists, social workers and psychologists. Some of the ways we can help include:*

- Providing parents with an opportunity to talk about their experiences, worries or questions regarding their child's heart condition.*
- Helping children and young people to cope with difficulties they may be having in relation to their heart condition, medical procedures or other aspects of life.*
- Supporting siblings, grandparents and extended family members. For example, supporting parents with how to talk to their other children about their brother or sisters heart condition.*
- Ongoing care and support for families who have lost a child due to heart disease.*

*If you would like to talk with a member of our family support team or make an appointment to meet, please call **(02) 9845 0088**. If we aren't able to take your call immediately, please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.*



Hi! My name is Ellis.

I am five years old.

My favourite things are Superman and playing doctors.



Did you know I have a heart condition?

This means that my heart doesn't work properly. No one knows why this happened. It is not because of anything I said or did wrong.

Soon I will need an operation so the doctors can help my heart to work better.



Before my operation. my family and I have to visit Pre-Admission Clinic. This is at the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

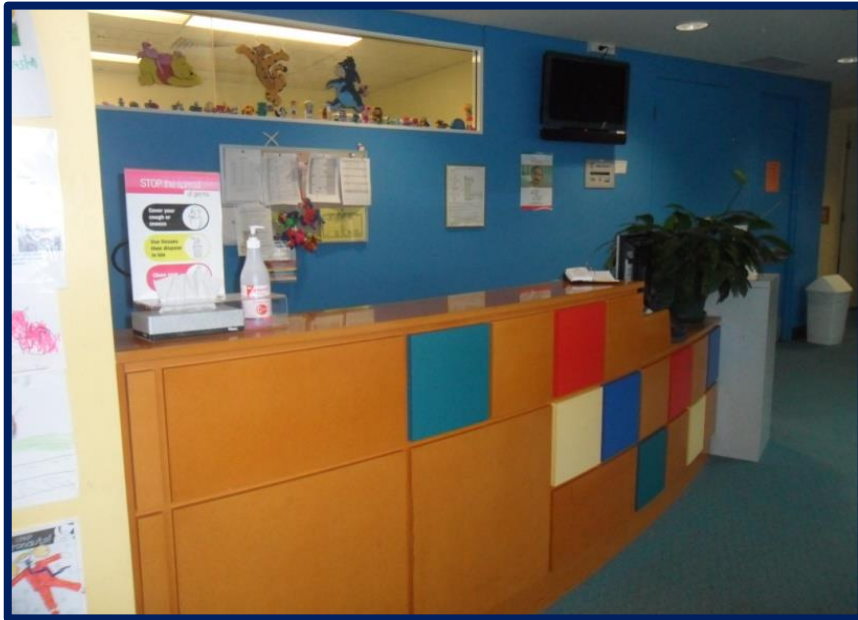
This lets the doctors and nurses see how my heart is working at the moment and make a plan for my operation.





When my family and I arrive at the clinic we tell the person at the desk we are here and then take a seat in the chairs.

If I like, I can play with some toys or read a book while I am waiting.



There are a number of things that happen next. These might be the same for you or a little different.

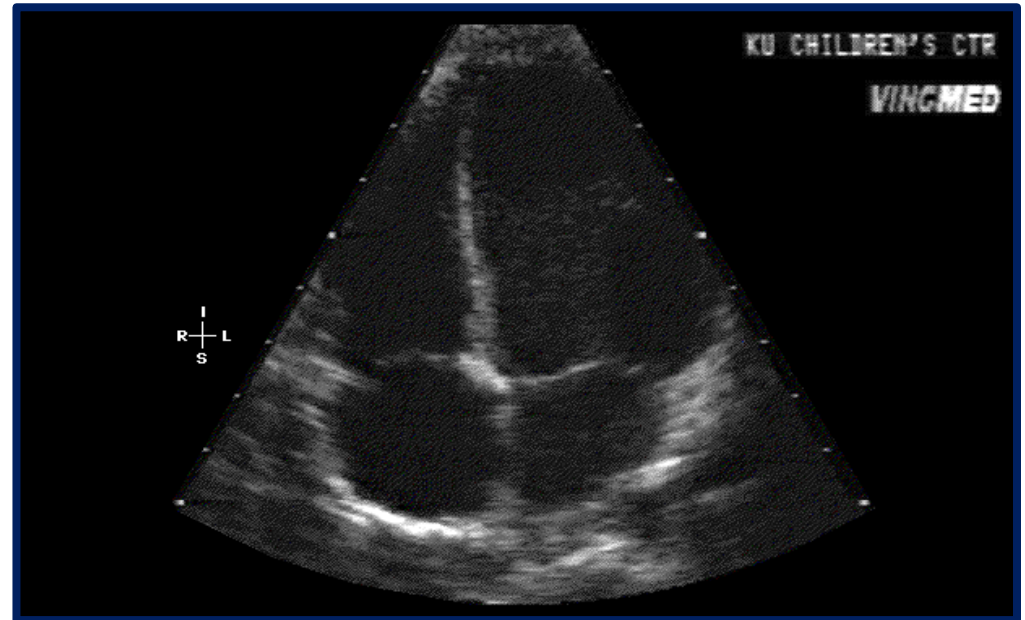
1. When I hear my name called I go into a room and meet Julie who is a nurse. Julie will see how tall I am and how much I weigh.





2. Next I need to have a scan of my chest called an echo. This lets the doctors and nurses see a picture of my heart.

If you have already had an echo on a different day you might not need to have another one.



I take off my shirt and lie down on the bed. The technician puts some gel on my chest. It feels a little cool. They make the room a little darker but I can still see.

My job is to lie very still while a special camera is put on different parts of my chest. While this is happening I choose to watch TV.



3. Then my family and I are shown to a different room. What can you see in here?



It's an ECG room! An ECG gives the doctors important information about how my heart is beating.

Small stickers are put on my arms, legs and chest. There are wires that are attached to these using coloured pegs.

I can see my heart beats on the computer screen. What I am seeing is also printed out on special paper.





4. Next it is time to meet the anaesthetist. This is the doctor who will give me special sleepy medicine during my surgery so that I don't see, feel or hear anything happening. She asks my family lots of questions.

I do some drawing that I have brought along. Do you have a toy or activity you could bring from home to play with?





Once the anaesthetist has asked my family all of the questions she listens to my heart using a stethoscope and has a look at my hands to see where the best place is to give me medicine during my surgery .



5. It is time to go for a walk downstairs to the Medical Imaging Department. Here I will have a chest x-ray so the doctors can see the size and shape of my heart and what is happening in my lungs.



I take off my shirt and put on a special apron. I stand up very straight and still in front of the camera. If I move the picture will be blurry! You might also have to sit on the bed to have your X Ray taken.

My family stand behind a special screen while the photo is being taken. I can still see them.





## 6. Where to next? Pathology!

This is where I will have a blood test.

I have a snack while we are waiting.

Yum raisin toast! What's your favourite food to eat?



I choose to sit on my dad's lap and put my arm on a soft pillow.  
Would you like to sit on the chair by yourself or on your family member's lap?

A band called a tourniquet is placed around my arm. It gives my arm a hug and makes it easier to see my veins so the nurse can choose the best spot.

While the needle slides in, I look at a book. I feel a little scratch but I sit very still and it is over quickly.



*What could you bring  
from home to look at or  
play during your blood  
test?*





7. Time to go back to the Pre-Admission clinic to see Julie and one of the doctors.

Julie asks my family lots more questions and I need to have my obs taken. Obs let people know how my body is working and include my temperature and blood pressure.



A cuff will be wrapped around my arm to take my blood pressure. It might feel a little tight.



A probe might be put on my finger to measure the amount of oxygen in my blood. It is like a peg. Can you see the red light inside?



A thermometer will be put under my arm to check my temperature. It will need to stay there until I hear a beep.



Now I have done all of these things I will be given something special. I wonder what it might be....

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



These are heart beads.

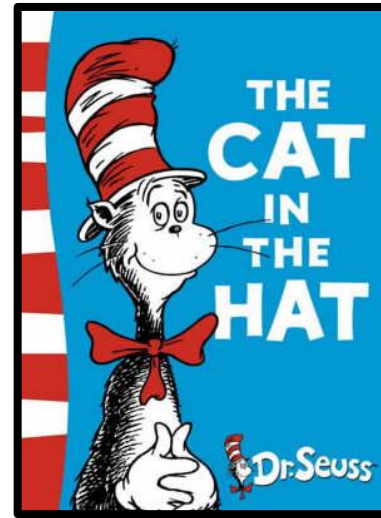
There is one bead for every test I had done today. There are even beads with my name and age on them.

I will get even more when I come back again soon for my operation.

Bye everyone.



## What To Bring to Pre-Admission Clinic



A favourite toy or activity



# What To Bring to Pre-Admission Clinic

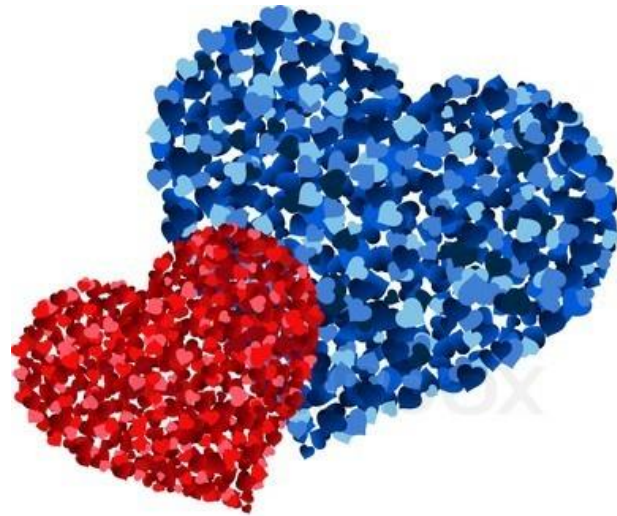


Snacks

Drink







## Acknowledgments

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*-Ellis and his parents, Rick and Maria, who kindly allowed us to document their journey through the Pre-Admission Clinic and beyond*

*-The Family Support Team for providing insight into the experiences of cardiology patients and families and to Kylie for coordinating.*

*-Julie and the rest of the wonderful Pre-Admission Team for allowing their work to be observed and photographed.*

