

to minimize, particularly in the first 1 to 2 years of life. From about 3 to 6 years old, children are frightened of what they perceive to be threats to their body and bodily function. They are egocentric in their view of the world and may perceive surgery as punishment for real or imagined wrongdoing and require reassurance that they are not to blame. By age 7, they have more ability to understand but may still associate surgery with punishment. Surgical repair is ideally performed before these fears and anxieties develop. In terms of anesthesia risk, elective procedures are generally performed after 6 months of age. It is thought that children do not have memory of procedures performed by 18 to 24 months old. Age 24 to 36 months may be a time when trauma of surgery is relatively less, but in the case of an external defect this prolongs correction. The American Academy of Pediatrics Action Committee on Surgery first published recommendations in terms of timing of elective surgery on the genitalia of male children as a review in 1996.

Nursing Care Management

Preparing children and their families for diagnostic and surgical procedures (see [Preparation for Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures, Chapter 20](#)) and for home care is a major nursing function. Most postoperative care involves care of the surgical site. Tub baths may be discouraged for a few days or longer, depending on procedure, if a stent or catheter is left in place, and surgeon preference. It is common practice to leave a urethral stent or catheter in place to drain directly into the diaper after some reconstructive procedures, such as hypospadias repair. The surgical site is kept clean and is inspected for signs of infection or bleeding. More complex surgeries require additional care and observation, such as drainage tube care and irrigation, dressing changes, and monitoring of collection devices.

Postoperative activity restrictions vary with age and type of surgery. Activity of infants and toddlers are not typically limited with the exception of avoiding straddle toys following penile or scrotal surgery. Older children may need more restriction from strenuous activity for 1 month after these type procedures. In the case of more extensive abdominal surgery, there may be restrictions on lifting and strenuous activity for a longer period. Swimming may be restricted especially when any drains are still in place or