



Information for
parents and
carers

General Anaesthesia

Procedure under general anaesthetic

Your child is going to have a general anaesthetic (be asleep for their operation)

We hope that this leaflet will answer many of the questions you may have.

Please use the space below to write down anything you would like to ask either prior to or on the day of admission. It will help to remind you:

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What is a general anaesthetic?

A general anaesthetic ensures that your child is unconscious and free from pain during the procedure. It consists of a combination of drugs given either as gas to breathe or as an injection or both together. An anaesthetist is a doctor who is specially trained to give anaesthetics.

Before coming to hospital, it is important to follow the starving instructions shown on the admission letter. Your child should have a drink of water or diluted cordial up until the last possible time given in the letter. If necessary, wake your child to give them a drink. This reduces the chances of your child being sick after the operation and helps them to recover. Your child's stomach must be as empty as possible from food and milk as this reduces the risk of vomiting during and after the operation.

If you would like to talk to a nurse before your child comes into hospital please contact the day case surgery team for advice on 01772 522245.

On the day of admission

A local anaesthetic cream may be applied to the back of both hands before surgery. This cream numbs the area and so helps to reduce a cannula hurting when it is put in the back of the hand in the anaesthetic room. A cannula is a thin plastic tube that is placed under the skin. A needle is needed to be used to put the cannula in but this is removed immediately and it is just the plastic tube that stays in place.

An anaesthetist should see your child before surgery on the ward. Do ask any questions you may have about your child's anaesthetic. Your child may be able to go to sleep with a mask and gas or with an injection through the cannula. Please discuss this with your nurse and/or the anaesthetist.

Your child may be given some painkiller medicine before surgery, this will be in liquid form.

If your child is very anxious a pre-medication can be given. This is a small drink of a medicine that calms and relaxes your child. When given your child will need to rest on their bed and will be taken to theatre on their bed or on a trolley.

After the operation

Your child will be taken into the recovery room where a nurse will monitor your child until they wake up. Once your child is awake, he/she will be brought back up to the ward to you.

Recovering on the ward

Your child may have been given pain relief and anti-sickness medicine in theatre. This can take many forms and your nurse will explain this to you.

Some children may require more pain relief on the ward. Your nurse will ensure your child is as pain free as possible.

Some children do feel nauseous or are sick. Further anti-sickness medicine can be given by your nurse on the ward.

Your nurse will let you know when your child is ready to go home. Some children will be booked as day cases and so stay only a few hours after the operation. Some will stay overnight. You should know before admission how long your child may stay in hospital.

The cannula will be removed by your nurse, usually once your child has eaten and had something to drink.

Caring for your child at home

Most children take 1-2 days to recover after a general anaesthetic depending on the length and type of operation.

After a stay in hospital some children can be clingy, difficult and not sleep well. This is a normal reaction and they usually return to normal within 3-4 weeks.

Ensure you understand the pain relief required for your child. Ask your nurse to explain this to you. They should rest to help them recover safely.

If they are unsteady, they should walk with you if they need to and avoid stairs if possible. They should take their usual medicines unless they are told not to by the doctor.

What should they not do?

They may not be able to think clearly after an anaesthetic or after they have been given sedation medicine for up to 24 hours. During this time they should not:

- Ride a bicycle or play on a climbing frame or trampoline
- For older children cook, use any machinery, make important decisions, post anything on social media

How safe is anaesthesia?

Modern anaesthesia is very safe and complications are rare for a child in good health having surgery.

- 1 child in 5 may be agitated on waking from the anaesthetic
- 1 child in 10 [like one person in a large family] might experience a headache, sore throat, sickness or dizziness
- 1 child in 100 [like one person in a street] may have a reaction to one of the drugs that has been given.
- 1 child in 10,000 [like one person in a small town] might develop a serious reaction [allergy] to the anaesthetic

Throughout the whole of life, an individual is at least 100 times more likely to suffer serious injury or death in a road traffic accident than as a result of anaesthesia.

What are the benefits of a general anaesthetic?

It will remove pain and sensation.

If your child is very anxious or worried it is the best option as they are unconscious during the operation.

Some operations can only be done under a general anaesthetic.

Other considerations

If your child is ill immediately prior to admission or has been in contact with any of the childhood infectious diseases within 3 weeks of their admission date, please contact the ward for advice.

If your child has had a vaccination within the 3 weeks prior to the operation date, please contact the ward for advice.

References

Your Child's General Anaesthetic: Royal College of Anaesthetists Feb 2020

Contact details

Ward 8 - 01772 522245

Sources of further information

<https://rcoa.ac.uk/patient-information/patient-information-resources/information-children-parents-carers>

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/deepsleep/166969823>

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team. If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણ માં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi."

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دوسری زبانوں اور بیڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو
یہی چھپا میں یہی ابی دست ہو سکت ہے براے مہر یان پوے چھہ ہی معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأ حروف كبرى و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعده في فهم هذه المعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب
أخرى يمانن تو فير هذه المعلوما

Department: Child Health
Division: Women and Children's
Production date: Feb 2022
Review date: Feb 2025
JR 866 v1