

# Your Child's Anaesthetic

An information guide



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This leaflet gives basic information to help you prepare your child for their anaesthetic. It has been adapted from the Trust leaflet, 'You and your anaesthetic' which was written by patients, patient representatives and anaesthetists working in partnership.

## Types of Anaesthesia

Anaesthesia stops you feeling pain and other sensations. It can be given in various ways and does not always make you unconscious.

- **Local anaesthesia (LA)** - Involves injections, which numb a small part of your body. You stay conscious but free from pain.
- **Regional anaesthesia** - Involves injections of LA, which numb a larger or deeper part of the body. You stay conscious but free from pain. This is rarely used with children and young people.
- **General anaesthesia** - Gives a state of controlled unconsciousness. It is essential for some operations. You are unconscious and feel nothing.

## Anaesthetists

Anaesthetists are doctors with specialist training who:

- Discuss types of anaesthesia with you and your child and find out what you would like, helping you to make choices.
- Discuss the risks of anaesthesia with you.
- Agree a plan with you for your child's anaesthetic and pain control.
- Are responsible for giving your child their anaesthetic and for your child's wellbeing and safety throughout their surgery.
- Make your child's experience as pleasant and pain free as possible.

## **Before coming to hospital**

You and your child will usually be invited to a preoperative assessment prior to coming into hospital where you can discuss details about what will happen in the case of an elective/planned operation/procedure.

The staff at the clinic will ask questions about your child's general health and will require an accurate list of all the medications your child usually takes.

If your child is allergic to anything please inform the staff at the clinic so it can be recorded in your child's notes.

The clinic is a very useful opportunity for you to ask any questions that you have about the anaesthetic and about coming into hospital generally. If the staff do not have all the answers you need, they will be able to help you find out more.

## **On the day**

Before attending hospital on the day of the anaesthetic please ensure your child removes all false nails, nail varnish, false eye lashes, make-up and any body piercings. Also please ensure that no body lotions are used on your child's skin on the day of the anaesthetic.

On admission you will be asked to clarify some of the questions you were previously asked at the pre-operative clinic. This is routine.

It is important that you bring all the medications your child normally takes with you to hospital.

If your child feels unwell or has a cold on the day before or on the day of the operation please telephone the children's ward for advice.

The anaesthetist will meet with you and your child before the operation and will ask questions to establish whether your child fits enough to have the operation. This will include questions about:

- Your child's general health.
- A discussion about which types of anaesthetic can be used.
- A discussion about which type of anaesthetic would be best for your child.

### **Nothing to eat or drink (Nil by mouth)**

It is extremely important to follow these instructions about fasting your child before a general anaesthetic. If there is food or drink in your child's stomach during anaesthetic, it could come back up the back of their throat and damage their lungs (pulmonary aspiration). Also, please ensure your child does not chew gum or suck sweets as this too generates stomach contents.

***If your child's operation is planned for the morning:*** The night before admission try and encourage your child to have something to eat prior to going to bed. Your child is not allowed to eat food or drink milk after 03:00am on the day of the operation, but may drink clear fluids **only** up to 07:00am. It is a good idea to wake your child at 06:30am to give them a drink of water.

***If your child's operation is planned for the afternoon:*** Your child **MUST** have a light breakfast before 07:30am. If your child has not had breakfast the operation will be cancelled. After 07:30am your child is not allowed to eat or drink milk, but may drink clear fluids **only** up to 11:00am.

If your admission letter does not make it clear if your child's operation is planned for the morning or afternoon please contact the relevant department **before** the day of admission on the telephone numbers below:

- The Royal Oldham Hospital Children's Ward – 0161 627 8866
- North Manchester General Hospital Children's Ward – 0161 604 5276
- Rochdale Infirmary Eye Ward - 01706 901766

## **When your child is called for their operation**

One parent or guardian (who must have parental responsibility) will be allowed to accompany your child to the anaesthetic room and you will be allowed to stay with your child until they are asleep. A staff member will also go with you.

Final checks will be made once your child arrives in the operating department. Theatre staff will check your child's identification bracelet, your child's name and date of birth, and will ask about other details in your child's medical records as a final check that your child is having the right operation on the correct part of the body (if applicable).

Your child will be anaesthetised in one of two ways:

- A needle is used to insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in the back of your child's hand or in their arm. Anaesthetic drugs can then be administered through the cannula. A topical anaesthetic cream will be offered to your child on admission to minimise discomfort.
- Your child may be asked to breathe anaesthetic gases through a mask.

## **Pain relief after surgery**

Good pain relief is important and some people need more pain relief than others. It is much easier to relieve pain if it is dealt with early. This is why it is very important for you and your child to be involved with pain management. If you think it could be relieved better, by either more or less pain relief please do not hesitate to tell your nurse. Pain relief can be increased, given more often, or given in different combinations. Occasionally, pain is a warning sign that all is not well; therefore, you should always report it to the nursing staff and seek their advice and help if you feel your child's pain is not being managed effectively.

## Common side effects

**Feeling sick and vomiting after surgery:** Some operations, anaesthetics and pain-relieving drugs are more likely to cause sickness (nausea) than others. Sickness can be relieved with medication, but it may last from a few hours to several days.

**Sore throat:** During surgery your child may have had a tube in their airway, which may give them a sore throat for a few days.

**Dizziness, blurred vision:** Anaesthetic may lower your child's blood pressure and make them feel faint. Fluids and/or other drugs may be given into a drip to treat this.

**Shivering:** This may be due to your child getting cold during surgery, a reaction to some drugs or to stress. Your child can be warmed very efficiently using a hot-air blanket if a low temperature is the cause of the shivering.

**Headache:** Most headaches can be treated with simple pain relievers.

**Itching:** This is a side effect of strong pain relievers but can also happen as an allergic reaction to many products. If your child has itchiness, please inform a member of the nursing or medical staff.

**Aches, pains and backache:** During your child's operation they may lie in the same position on a firm operating table for a long time. Great care is taken to position patients in theatre, but some people still feel uncomfortable afterwards.

**Pain during injection of drugs:** Drugs used may cause some pain or discomfort when they are injected.

**Bruising and soreness:** This may occur around injection and surgery sites. It normally settles without treatment, but if the area becomes uncomfortable, the position of the drip can be changed.

## **Questions you may like to ask the anaesthetist**

- Who will give my child's anaesthetic?
- Does my child have to have this type of anaesthetic or pain relief?
- Have you often used this type of anaesthetic or pain relief?
- What are the risks of this type of anaesthetic or pain relief?
- Are there any special risks?
- How will my child feel afterwards?

## **After discharge**

If your child has had a general anaesthetic your child will need to be supervised by a responsible adult for 24-48 hours until the effects of the anaesthetic have completely worn off. When you return home with your child, **do not** let him/her do the following for at least 24hrs:

- Return to school.
- Play outside unsupervised.
- Ride a bike.
- Take a bath or shower alone.

Your child can eat and drink as normal at home. If he/she feels sick encourage them to have clear fluids and reintroduce a light diet when they begin to feel better.

If your child has had a local anaesthetic please be aware that it can take up to 6hrs for the effects to wear off. Your child can eat and drink as normal and will need to rest at home for the remainder of the day.

## **Returning to school/nursery**

Specific advice on when your child will be able to return to school/nursery will be given to you, depending on the type of operation your child has had. You will also be informed if a Children's Community Nurse will be involved in your child's care following discharge.

**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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