

## Patient information

### **Help You Prepare for Your Special Care Dentistry Anaesthetic**

#### Liverpool University Dental Hospital

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 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 anaesthetic and pain control
- Are responsible for giving your anaesthetic and for your wellbeing and safety throughout your surgery
- Make your experience as pleasant and pain free as possible.

##### **How will I be informed of my admission date?**

- Your admission date will be sent out to you in the post. You will be contacted by the dental hospital theatre nurses in the week before your admission. This is a normal procedure to ensure you have a trouble-free visit on the day.

#### **Before coming into hospital**

##### **Here are some things that you can do to prepare yourself for your operation.**

- If you smoke, giving up for several weeks before the operation reduces the risk of breathing problems. The longer you can give up beforehand, the better. If you cannot stop smoking completely, cutting down will help.
- If you are very overweight, reducing your weight will reduce many of the risks of having an anaesthetic, as well as the risk of clots in the legs, chest infections and poor wound healing.
- If you have loose teeth or crowns, please inform your anaesthetist on the day.

## **On the day of your operation**

- On the day of your appointment please present to the dental theatre through the entrance advised at your pre-assessment phone call. This will either be the University entrance or the main entrance of the Liverpool University Dental Hospital, Pembroke Place, Liverpool L3 5PS at the time advised.
- Nothing to eat or drink - fasting ('Nil by mouth') The hospital should give you clear instructions about fasting. It is important to follow these. If there is food or liquid in your stomach during your anaesthetic, it could come up to the back of your throat and damage your lungs.
- If you are taking medicines, you should continue to take them as usual unless your anaesthetist, surgeon or the preop nurse has asked you not to. For example, if you take drugs to stop you getting blood clots (anticoagulants), aspirin, drugs for diabetes or herbal remedies, you will be given specific instructions.
- If you feel unwell when you are due to come into hospital, please telephone dental theatre for advice.
- Please remove nail varnish, false nails or gels before coming to the hospital. This ensures that the clip on your finger to measure oxygen levels works well during your anaesthetic.
- Wear sensible clothing e.g. flat shoes, loose clothing. Please bring a change of clothes and all items you need for personal care.
- Please bring two adult relatives, friends or carers with you who will need to stay in the hospital during your treatment and take you home by car or taxi (public transport is not recommended). They can accompany you until you are asleep and can be there after you wake up.

## **Your anaesthetist will meet you on the day or may meet you before your operation and will:**

Ask you about your health.

- Discuss with you which types of anaesthetic can be used.
- Discuss with you the benefits, risks and preferences.
- Decide with you which anaesthetic would be best for you.
- Decide for you, if you would prefer that.

Please let us know if you have had any problems during or after general anaesthesia in the past, or if there is a family history of problems.

## **The choice of anaesthetic medicines you will be given depends on:**

Your operation.

- Your answers to the questions you have been asked.
- Your physical condition.

- Your preferences and the reasons for them.
- Your anaesthetist's recommendations for you and the reasons for them.

Premedication (a 'premed') is the name for drugs, which are sometimes given before an anaesthetic. They can be given to you in the form of a flavoured drink or a nasal spray that makes you sleepy. Some premeds prepare your body for the anaesthetic, others help you to relax. They may make you drowsier after the operation. If you think a premed would help you, ask your anaesthetist.

A needle may be used to start your anaesthetic. If this worries you, you can ask to have a local anaesthetic cream put on your arm to numb the skin. The ward nurses should be able to do this.

### **When you are called for your operation**

- A member of staff will go with you to the theatre.
- A relative or friend may be able to go with you to the anaesthetic room.
- You can wear your glasses, hearing aids and dentures until you are in the anaesthetic room.
- Jewellery and decorative piercing should ideally be removed. If you cannot remove your jewellery, it can be covered with tape to prevent damage to it or to your skin.
- Theatre staff will check your identification bracelet, your name and date of birth, and may ask you about other details in your medical records as a final check that you are having the right operation.

### **The operating department (theatres)**

Most anaesthetics are started in the anaesthetic room. The anaesthetist will attach machines that measure your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels. When the anaesthetic has started, you will go through to the operating theatre for the operation.

General anaesthetics

#### **There are two ways of starting a general anaesthetic.**

- Anaesthetic drugs may be injected into a vein through the cannula. This is generally used for adults.
- You can breathe anaesthetic gases and oxygen through a mask, which you may hold if you prefer.

Once you are unconscious, an anaesthetist stays with you at all times and continues to give you drugs to keep you asleep for the duration of the operation.

As soon as the operation is finished, the drugs will be stopped or reversed so that you regain consciousness.

After the operation, you will be taken back to the theatre bay. Recovery staff will be with you at all times. When they are satisfied that you have recovered safely from the anaesthetic, your family, carers or escort will be able to sit with you.

## **What dental treatment will I have?**

The dental team will have discussed your likely treatment plan at the initial assessment visit in the Special Care Dentistry Department. Comprehensive dental treatment under general anaesthetic usually involves undertaking all the necessary dental treatment that you require. This includes thoroughly examining the mouth, teeth and gums, taking x-rays if required, dental fillings, extractions and scaling. It is also possible to undertake simple medical tests (e.g. taking bloods) if requested by your doctor.

## **How long will my treatment take?**

You should allow the whole day. Your treatment will occur before lunch and can take up to three hours. In most cases you will be allowed home by early afternoon.

## **Pain relief afterwards**

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 before it gets bad. Pain relief can be increased, given more often, or given in different combinations. It is advised to have appropriate pain relief ready at home in a form that can be accepted by yourself/ the patient.

Some degree of pain and discomfort should be expected for a number of days following your operation, especially if you have had teeth removed. Occasionally, pain is a warning sign that all is not well, so you should ask for help if you feel your pain is not being managed.

## **Pain relief is most often provided in the form of pills, tablets or liquids to swallow.:**

Oral pain relief can be used for all types of pain. It can take at least half an hour to work. You need to be able to eat, drink and not feel sick for these drugs to work.

## **What will I feel like afterwards?**

How you feel will depend on the type of anaesthetic and operation you have had, how much pain relieving medicine you need and your general health.

You will stay in our unit until you are fully recovered and ready to go home. Once you are awake, your escort(s) may come in to see you.

You should rest for the remainder of the day, not returning to work/school/day centre.

You should not operate any machinery or carry out household tasks such as cooking or cleaning.

You must have someone to look after you until the next morning. General anaesthesia may make you feel tired for a few days and you may have a sore throat- this is normal.

## **What should I do if I have a query or concern once I am home after my procedure?**

**If you have a dental problem relating to your recent procedure, please contact:**

- Dental Theatre- 0151 706 5012
- Special Care Dentistry- 0151 706 5530
- Out of office hours please contact NHS Direct 111

If you have a medical problem, please contact your GP or NHS Direct 111

## **Understanding risk**

In modern anaesthesia, serious problems are uncommon. Risk cannot be removed completely, but modern equipment, training and drugs have made it a much safer procedure in recent years.

To understand risk, you need to know the following: how likely it is to happen; how serious it could be; how it can be treated.

The risk to you as an individual will depend on the following: whether you have any other illness; personal factors, such as smoking or being overweight, surgery which is complicated, long or undertaken in an emergency.

**People vary in how they interpret words and numbers. This scale is provided to help:**

### **Very common:**

Equivalent to 1 person in your family      Common:

Equivalent to 1 person in a street      Uncommon:

Equivalent to 1 person in a village      Rare:

Equivalent to 1 person in a small town      Very rare:

Equivalent to 1 person in a large town

1 in 10

1 in 100

1 in 1000

1 in 10,000

1 in 100,000

## **Side effects and complications**

### **Very common and common side effects**

**General anaesthetic:** Feeling sick and vomiting after surgery; dizziness, blurred vision; headache; Itching; Aches, pains and backache; pain during injection of drugs; bruising and soreness; sore throat; confusion or memory loss, loss or damage to teeth or crowns/caps/veneers/bridges, minor cuts or bruising to lips and tongue.

## **Uncommon side effects and complications**

**General anaesthetic:** Chest infection; bladder problems; muscle pains; slow breathing (depressed respiration); an existing medical condition getting worse; awareness (becoming conscious during your operation).

Rare or very rare complications

**General anaesthetic:** Damage to the eyes; serious allergy to drugs; nerve damage; death; equipment failure.

Deaths caused by anaesthesia are very rare and are usually caused by a combination of four or five complications together.

There are probably about five deaths for every million anaesthetics in the UK.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future. Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

**Department of Anaesthetics Tel: 0151 706 2000 ext. 2430**

**Special Care Dentistry**

**Tel: 0151 706 5530**

**Dental Theatres**

**Tel: 0151 706 5012**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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