

Anaesthetic Pre - Operative Service

General Anaesthetic

Information for parents and carers

Introduction

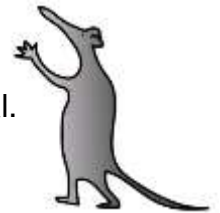
This fact sheet aims to provide you with information about your child's general anaesthetic.

General Anaesthesia

A general anaesthetic ensures your child is unconscious to allow a certain operation, procedure or investigation to be carried out. Anaesthetics are given by specialist anaesthetic doctors. Anaesthetics are started by an injection through a plastic tube placed into your child's vein or through breathing a special gas through a mask. Medication or gas is then continued throughout the procedure to keep your child asleep and then stopped to allow them to wake up.

Preparing your child

There are several things that you can do to prepare your child for coming into hospital. Unless your child is very young, you should try and explain:



- That they are going into hospital
- That they will be asleep when they have their operation or investigation.
- Some basic information about what will happen to them when they are in hospital.

Important information

It is usually best that general anaesthetics are carried out when your child is well. If your child is unwell leading up to the planned admission date, please contact the pre-admission service for advice before the day of surgery.

Clothing

Children are advised to wear loose, comfortable clothing/ pyjamas, however your child may be asked to wear a hospital gown for their procedure/operation.

The day of surgery

All children coming in for an expected procedure under general anaesthetic should have an empty stomach, as this makes the anaesthetic safer. That being said, it is important to keep this time as short as possible. Children's stomachs take different lengths of time to empty depending on what is in them.

Children over 1 year of age

- Up to 6 hours before the anaesthetic, children can have food and milk products.
- Up to 1 hour before the anaesthetic, children can have clear fluid only

Babies under 1 year

- If on solids, foods as above
- Up to 4 hours before the anaesthetic, babies can have formula feeds
- Up to 3 hours before the anaesthetic, babies can have breast milk.
- Up to 1 hour before the anaesthetic babies can have water only.



You will be visited by an anaesthetic doctor who will ask you questions about your child's health, plan with you the best way of carrying out the anaesthetic on your child and answer any questions that you may have. If there is a plan to use the injection, numbing cream will be placed on your child's hand to numb the skin over the vein and make the insertion of the plastic tube (cannula) for the anaesthetic medicine easier.

In the anaesthetic room

You may accompany your child to the anaesthetic room. It is usual for only one parent to attend. If your child is bigger they will be put on a trolley with you close by. If they are smaller it is sometimes easier to anaesthetise them on your lap and then staff will lift them onto a trolley. The anaesthetic doctor and theatre staff will talk you and your child through everything that will happen (age appropriate).

If the injection is used some children complain of coldness or discomfort in their hand but your child will go to sleep very quickly. If the mask is used it will likely take a couple of minutes. During this time your child may become wriggly and start to move around as they drift into a deeper sleep. This is perfectly normal but can sometimes be upsetting to watch. Staff will help you hold your child gently but firmly during this time. Once your child is asleep you will be asked to leave the anaesthetic room and the operation or procedure will start.

Afterwards

Your child will wake up in the recovery room and be looked after by a recovery nurse. You will be asked to go to recovery to be with your child as soon as they are awake. Soon afterwards you and your child will be escorted back to the ward or post-operative day case area where staff will inform you of the next stage of the process.

Alder Hey Children's Hospital is one of the largest in the UK. The anaesthetic department have over 27 experienced Consultants supported by senior trainee anaesthetists and are looking forward to supporting your child and you through this process.

Contact details:

Anaesthetic Pre -Operative Service

Alder Hey Children's Hospital : **0151 252 5845**

We have an answerphone therefore if no one immediately answers the phone, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Further age appropriate information leaflets are obtainable from the hospital or via the website: www.rcoa.ac.uk/patientinfo

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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