



Your child's general anaesthetic

This booklet explains what to expect when your child comes into hospital to have an operation or investigation under a general anaesthetic.

You can watch a video of what it's like to go to hospital and have an anaesthetic at www.apagbi.org.uk/children-and-young-people/videos-children

There is also an app you can download on your iPhone, iPad or Android devices that has a virtual tour of the hospital and further information on the day. This is called Little Journey

Afternoon admission (if we ask you to attend at 12.30pm)

Your child needs to have been fasting from 7.00am. Please give your child a light breakfast to be finished by 7.00am. Encourage them to drink water or a weak squash until 12.30pm. It is important that they have clear drinks until this time to prevent them from becoming too thirsty or dehydrating.

Babies under a year old should be breast fed until 4.30am for a 7.30am admission, and until 9.30am for a 12.30pm admission. Please offer them water after this until you arrive at hospital.

Your child will be offered some water or squash on arrival at the Day Surgery Unit and depending on the time of the procedure, may be offered further drinks.

The pre-operative visit

An anaesthetist will usually visit you on the ward before the procedure to discuss your child's anaesthetic. The anaesthetist will ask you about your child's general health, and will discuss with you and your child how he or she will go to sleep ("be anaesthetised"). The anaesthetist will also discuss the type of pain relief to be used during and after the procedure.

For practical reasons, occasionally the anaesthetist who sees you on the ward might not be the same one who gives your child's anaesthetic, but the information you give them will be diligently passed on.

Delaying the operation or investigation

Occasionally the anaesthetist may learn something about your child that means it would be safer not to do the procedure on that day.

This could happen if your child has a bad cold or has a rash.

Premedication (a "premed")

Premedication is the name for medicines given before an anaesthetic. Some premeds help your child to relax, and some are related to the kind of surgery he or she will be having.

Sedatives to ease your child's anxiety

An extra dose of your child's usual medication, for example for asthma.

Going to theatre

Your child can wear his or her own clothes, or he or she can wear a hospital gown. Your child will be able to keep underwear on, unless this underwear has metal clips or fastenings. Depending on the procedure, clothing may be removed when your child is asleep. Loose-fitting clothing work best. Unfortunately clothes can get stained during the operation and therefore please try and avoid lightly coloured clothing if at all possible.

You can accompany your child to the anaesthetic room, along with a ward nurse who will take you back to the ward when your child is asleep. If you prefer not to accompany your child, a nurse from the ward will accompany him or her. Don't be afraid to let the ward nurse know.

Your child will either have an anaesthetic gas to breathe or medicine through a small plastic tube (cannula). Itt8ghtly colo-20D.0002 Tr

Some children are very distressed when they wake from the anaesthetic. This is common in children under 3 years and sometimes in children who were upset before they were anaesthetised. It is not related to pain. Your child may take a little while to calm down, but will usually settle after returning to the ward, having food and drink, and playing with their toys or watching TV.

Pain relief

Pain relieving medicines are given during the anaesthetic to ensure that your child is as comfortable as possible after surgery. The type and strength of pain relief given will depend on the procedure. To try to avoid injections, sometimes pain killers may be given as suppositories.

The team will discuss with you the kind of pain relief your child will get during and after the operation.

Going home

Most children have their operations and investigations done as day cases, and go home later on the same day. Please make sure you have painkillers at home for your child. As long as your child is back to normal and eating and drinking, he or she will be allowed home about 2 hours after returning to the ward. The time will be longer for some operations.

Occasionally children may feel sick or even vomit after they have left hospital, especially during the car journey home.

Before you leave, you will be told who to contact if you have any concerns about your child when you get home. This could be the ward you were on, the Emergency Department or your GP. If you don't know who to contact, please ask.

Your child should not have a bath or shower

Further information

Day Surgery Unit
Tel: 01271 322 455

Caroline Thorpe Ward
Tel: 01271 322704