

Procedural Anxiety

Anaesthetic

What is an anaesthetic?

An anaesthetic is a type of medicine that changes the way you feel things. There are two main types:

Local anaesthetic

- Medicine that makes part of your body numb so it doesn't feel pain.
- The local anaesthetic may be a cream, a spray or an injection.

General anaesthetic

- Medicine that makes you completely unconscious. You can't see, hear or feel anything, like a really deep sleep.
- A general anaesthetic is used for operations and some medical tests.



An **anaesthetist** is a specially trained doctor. They give you the anaesthetic medicine you need and keep you asleep for your procedure.



What will happen?

Before your anaesthetic, you should be able to meet your anaesthetist and talk about what's going to happen.

How do general anaesthetics work?

The medicine travels through your body to the nerves in your brain.



In the brain it slows the nerves down and you will go into a really deep sleep.

When the medicine is stopped, it wears off quickly while your anaesthetist is still looking after you.

What happens afterwards?

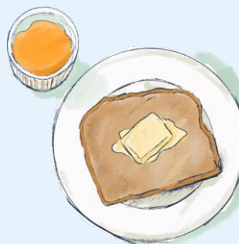
You wake up! You might feel sleepy, dizzy, sick or have a sore throat, but this won't last long. If you don't feel good, tell someone so that they can help you feel better.

Are anaesthetics safe?

Yes, they are very safe. Your anaesthetist is there with you all the time to make sure you are asleep for your procedure and wake up safely.

Can I eat or drink?

You must not eat or drink before your operation although you may be allowed a drink of water first thing in the morning. It is important to make sure you have nothing in your stomach before the procedure. Being sick isn't safe for you or nice for your anaesthetist!





Coping with nervous feelings

Don't worry if you feel scared or nervous before your procedure – it's quite normal!

Here are some ways to distract yourself:

- Read a book
- Play a game
- Listen to music
- Talk to someone
- Imagine being somewhere nice



Step by step

When you arrive at the hospital:

- You will be weighed. Your anaesthetist uses your weight to work out the right dose of medicine for you.
- Your anaesthetist will often put a small plastic tube called a cannula into one of your veins, often on the back of your hand. You may get your general anaesthetic through this cannula.
- Your anaesthetist puts the medicine in the cannula with a syringe – this can feel cold or tingly when it goes in.
- You will be given oxygen to breathe through a special mask. You may also get your anaesthetic through this mask.
- The anaesthetic medicine in the mask smells a bit like felt-tip pens.
- The anaesthetic works quickly – you will soon fall asleep. The next thing you know...
- ...when everything is done, your anaesthetist will wake you up.



If you are really worried you can ask for support from a play specialist. Play specialists will help you manage your nervous feelings and support you through your anaesthetic.

Here are some apps with helpful free content –



Sometimes it helps to shift your attention outside of your body – try this exercise!

Try and name...



4 things you can see



3 things you can touch



2 things you can hear



1 good thing about you

ABUHB Paediatric Psychology Service

Contact:

ABB.PaediatricPsychology@wales.nhs.uk



For further support and information about your procedure

Please scan this QR code and it will take you to the Paediatric Psychology website.

