



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice following a general anaesthetic for oral surgery

Adult Day Surgery Unit

This leaflet is for patients who have had day oral surgery under a general anaesthetic at the Adult Day Surgery Unit in the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Please read it before you go home so that you can have any of your questions answered before you leave. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with your nurse.

After a general anaesthetic

The anaesthetic drug remains in your body for up to 24 hours after your operation and over this period you may feel tired and drowsy. It is essential that you heed the following advice:

- Do not drive a car, or any other vehicles, including bicycles.
- Do not operate machinery / appliances such as cookers / kettles.
- Go straight home and rest quietly for the remainder of the day.
- Have a responsible adult to look after you for at least 24 hours following your discharge from the Unit
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat a light diet, avoiding alcohol.
- Do not lock the bathroom or toilet door. Do not make yourself inaccessible to the person looking after you.
- You may take painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen. If you require stronger tablets, these will be provided before leaving the Unit. You may have received a local anaesthetic at the site of the operation – this will wear off in about 1-2 hours so ensure you have pain relief ready when this happens.
- Do not sign important documents or make major decisions for 24 hours after the anaesthetic.

If you have a problem requiring medical attention after your return home, please contact your GP.

Aftercare advice

- Do not rinse or spit out for the remainder of the day – this may disturb the blood clot that forms in the wound and may cause further bleeding and infection.
- Avoid eating and drinking anything too hot – everything you eat or drink must be lukewarm. Eat a soft diet.
- Do not smoke – smoking can cause infection and delay the healing process because it can prevent a clot forming.
- Do not drink alcohol – this can cause more bleeding and swelling as it opens up the blood vessels.
- The operation site may start to bleed slightly. If this happens, take a piece of gauze which the nurse will have given you, damp it slightly, then roll it up and place it in the operated area and bite down on it for around 20 minutes. Do this twice if necessary or until the bleeding stops.
- You may have stitches in place after your operation. These are dissolvable and will ‘fall out’ within 10-14 days.
- If you experience swelling after the operation, use an icepack or pack of frozen peas to help decrease the swelling.
- Take painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen regularly throughout the day – follow the dosage instructions on the packaging. Do not take aspirin or painkillers that contain aspirin, this may cause bleeding. If you need advice regarding pain control, ask your local pharmacist or phone the ADSU or Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department.
Painkillers should be taken for at least 2-3 days. After this time, the operation site should start to settle down.
- You can brush your teeth as normal from tomorrow, taking care around the wound area.

The day of the operation

Rinse your mouth with salt water – mix 1tsp of salt into a glass of water (as hot as you can stand) and rinse your mouth. Do this 3-4 times a day for 7-10 days. Or use a non-alcoholic mouthwash.

You may be given a course of antibiotics. Please take them as instructed and ensure you complete the course. Antibiotics may interfere with alcohol and the contraceptive pill.

Advice for relatives/friends

Due to the anaesthetic drugs remaining in the body for 24 hours, it is very common to feel faint after a general anaesthetic. If the patient feels weak or faints, lie them down and place a cushion under their feet to elevate their legs. Provide a source of fresh air, loosen their clothes and make sure an adult is with them until they recover. If they are not feeling sick, they should drink plenty of water. In the event of the patient continuing to feel faint, please contact your GP for further advice.

During the first 24 hours following your discharge

If you have any further concerns about your surgery, please telephone the ADSU: 0118 322 7622.

Opening hours are 7.30am to 10.00pm Monday-Friday.

If you experience any excessive pain, swelling or bleeding, please contact the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Department on: 0118 322 7139, Monday–Friday 8am-5pm.

Out of hours please contact NHS 111.

After 24 hours, please seek advice from your GP.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT ADSU/Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery November 2025

Next review due: November 2027