

Having an operation under local anaesthetic (LA)

Introduction

This leaflet explains what will happen when you come to the hospital for your operation or procedure. It is important that you understand what to expect and feel able to take an active role in your treatment. Your operation or procedure is usually performed as a day case (so you will go home the same day) or as an overnight stay depending on your medical and or social history. There will be many different health professionals involved in your care during your stay and there will be a clear plan for any after care when you are discharged from hospital. This leaflet will answer some of the questions about the anaesthetic that you may have but if there is anything that you and your family are not sure about then please ask your doctor or nurse.

What is a local anaesthetic?

A local anaesthetic involves injections which numb a small part of your body. You stay conscious but free from pain at the site of the injections. Sedation (a drug to make you drowsy and less anxious) is occasionally used for procedures carried out under local anaesthetic.

Before you come in

You do not need to stop eating or drinking before having this surgery or procedure.

Please wear loose fitting clothes as wound dressings may be bulky. Wear flat, comfortable shoes. You will need to bring a dressing gown, slippers, any drugs, medicines or inhalers you are using / taking. If you are taking regular medication, please contact Pre-Operative Assessment before your admission for further advice (telephone number at the end of this leaflet). Please leave valuable items at home.

When you are called for your operation

A member of staff will go with you to the theatre or department where your procedure is taking place.

You can wear your glasses, hearing aids and dentures (if you have them) throughout the procedure.

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; however, it may need to be removed if it will interfere with the site of surgery or procedure.

When you are in theatre or department where procedure is taking place.

Your surgeon will ask you to keep quite still while the injections are given.

- You may notice a warm tingling feeling as the anaesthetic begins to take effect.
- Your operation / procedure will only go ahead when you and your surgeon are sure that the area is numb.
- If you are not having sedation you will remain alert and aware of your surroundings. A screen shields the operating site so you will not see the operation unless you want to.

Side effects of local anaesthetics

- Common: Some discomfort during injection of the local anaesthetic.
- Uncommon: Blurred vision, headache, tingling around mouth.
- Very rare: Difficulty breathing, loss of consciousness.

What will happen after I am discharged?

- Arrangements: It is important that you make arrangements for a responsible adult to: take you home by car or taxi, as you will not be able to drive yourself or use public transport. They will also need to look after you for 24 hours following your discharge, receive discharge advice and information about your care at home.
- Pain: The area will be numb for a number of hours, as feeling returns you may experience some pain; if you are in pain, take your normal painkiller, such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen, following the dosage instructions on the pack.
- Wound care: Advice will be given by the unit/ward staff after your operation / procedure
- Work: How long you need to take off work will depend on what your job involves and what operation / procedure you have had. Please discuss with the surgeon on the day of your operation. If you need a certificate for time off work ask the nurse before you are discharged. Further certificates can be provided by your GP.
- Driving: You should refrain from driving until you are safe to do so. Your doctor can advise you on how long to wait. It is advisable to contact your insurance company to inform them of the surgery / procedure you have had.
- Follow up appointment: Will depend on the surgery / procedure you have had and the nursing staff will advise at the time of discharge.

Useful numbers and contacts

Adult Day Surgery Unit:	0118 322 7622
Chesterman Ward:	0118 322 8848
Heygroves Ward:	0118 322 7544
Trueta Ward:	0118 322 7541
Hopkins Ward:	0118 322 7274
Hunter Ward:	0118 322 7535
Lister Ward:	0118 322 7572
Redlands Ward:	0118 322 7484
Pre-operative Assessment:	0118 322 6546
Royal Berkshire Hospital	0118 322 5111

West Berkshire Community Hospital: 01635 273300

If you have any concerns during the first 24 hours of your discharge please phone the ward / unit you were admitted to.

Restricted opening hours for departments are:

Adult Day Surgery Unit: 7.30am-10.00pm Monday to Friday, 7.30am-4.00pm Saturdays.

Chesterman Unit: 7.00am-3.00pm Monday to Friday

Pre-operative Assessment: 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday

After 24 hours please seek advice from your GP

Further information

For more information about the Trust, visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

For more information about anaesthetics, look at website www.rcoa.ac.uk/document-store/you-and-your-anaesthetic

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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