

Having a general anaesthetic

If you are ill, your doctor may say you need some tests or an operation to help you get better.



Because some people find tests frightening or because they might hurt, the doctor or nurse may decide you need a general anaesthetic.

This means, you are given medicine to make you go to sleep so you do not feel anything.



This leaflet will tell you what happens when you have a general anaesthetic.



General anaesthetic – Easy Read

On the day of your test or operation, you will have to stop eating and drinking a few hours before you come into hospital.

Your carer will tell you what time you can eat and drink until.



You may feel hungry or thirsty but it is very important that you do not eat or drink anything, including sweets or chewing gum.



When you arrive at the hospital you and your carer will go straight to the ward.

Your carer will be told where this ward is and what it is called.



All the staff in the hospital wear a name badge and when they speak to you, they should always tell you their name.



General anaesthetic – Easy Read

You will be asked to get undressed behind the curtains and to change into your nightie or pyjamas and dressing gown.



The nurse will then ask you and your carer some questions and will put a plastic bracelet on you. This has important information on and it should be worn all the time.



A doctor called an anaesthetist (an anaesthetic is a drug that sends you to sleep) will then come and see you on the ward.

He or she will ask you some more questions and will answer any questions you or your carer may have.

You or your carer may be asked to sign a form to say you want to have the test or operation and the anaesthetic.



General anaesthetic – Easy Read

The nurse or doctor will then rub a special cream on the back of one of your hands. This is so you won't feel the plastic tube that will be put in later. The plastic tube is used to give the medicines that send you to sleep. It won't hurt although your hand may feel tingly.



You will then wait on the ward until you are ready to have your test or operation.

It is important that you still don't eat or drink anything.



When it is time for your test or operation, you and your carer will be taken to the treatment room. You may be asked to walk or sit in a wheelchair or you may be taken there on a trolley.



General anaesthetic – Easy Read

In the treatment room, the doctor will talk to you and will put a very thin plastic tube in the back of your hand with a needle.

This is where the cream was rubbed so it will not hurt.

The doctor will put the drug to make you sleep in through the tube in your hand.



You will feel sleepy very quickly and will soon be fast asleep.

If you want, your carer can stay with you until you are asleep.



When you wake up, the test or operation will be finished. You will wake up in a big room with a nurse looking after you. You will stay here until you wake up properly. If you want, your carer will also be waiting for you here.



General anaesthetic – Easy Read

If you feel sick or frightened, tell the nurse - he or she can help you.

Also if anything is sore, please tell your nurse so they can give you some medicine to make it feel better.



When you are more awake, a nurse and a porter will take you back to the ward on a trolley. Your carer will come with you too.



On the ward, the nurses will look after you and check your pulse and blood pressure to make sure you are feeling ok.



If you are feeling hungry, the nurse can bring you something to eat or drink, like tea and toast.



General anaesthetic – Easy Read

If you have had an operation you will probably stay on the ward for a day or two. You might need more medicines to make sure nothing hurts.

If you have had a test, like a scan, you will be able to go home once the nurses are happy that you are well enough.



If you or your carer needs help while you are in the hospital, ask one of the nurses to either call the Learning Disability Co-ordinator on ext 8159 or PALS on ext 8338.



More information for people with learning disabilities and their carers can be found on the Trust website at: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk



Also available in this series:

- Getting help in hospital
- Having a blood test
- Having a scan
- Having an x-ray
- Washing your hands
- Going to the Acute Medical Unit (AMU)
- Coming in for checks (pre-op)
- Going into hospital – ‘being admitted’
- Having a general anaesthetic
- Going to the Accident & Emergency Department (A&E)



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