



ANAESTHESIOLOGY



What is a general anaesthetic?

A general anaesthetic is medication given so that your child is not conscious and cannot see, hear or feel anything during the procedure or operation. An anaesthetic will be given to your child by a specialist doctor called an anaesthetist.

Our Team

Our highly skilled team of Anaesthetists is led by Dr Clover-Ann Lee who is supported by a team of caring anaesthetists who always put the interests of the patient and family first.

They are skilled in providing this specialised care which at times can include critically ill patients. These skills and dedication are offered in a complete range of services that cater to the special needs of children.

As patient safety is paramount, our specialist paediatric anaesthetists work as part of the interdisciplinary team to provide exceptional patient care at all times.



Anaesthesia (pronounced "ah-nes-thee-see-ya") plays a critical role in the treatment of patients. Our paediatric anaesthetists provide anaesthesia for infants and children with the aim of maximising safety while minimising discomfort during treatments and operations.

They are involved in assessing patients before their operations to select the most suitable anaesthetic method. To keep in line with our principle of child and family centred care, we aim to keep all patients and their families well informed about what they will experience before and after their surgery. In the operating theatre, our anaesthetists continuously monitor all patients.

Contact Information

Department of Anaesthesia

Phone: 010 133 0600

Information for children, parents and caregivers



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A family dedicated to care

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What you need to know

Before you come to the hospital

- Your child should be prepared for the procedure in a manner they can understand.
- The anaesthetists or nurse will give clear instructions about when your child can eat and drink before the procedure.
- It is important to follow these instructions, as any food or liquid in your child's stomach could come up into their throat and damage the lungs during the anaesthetic.
- Unless you are told otherwise, your child should adhere to the following steps prior to surgery:

Stop eating and drinking before anaesthesia or sedation



When at the hospital

- Your anaesthetist will visit you in the ward before coming to theatre. It is important that the parent/caregiver informs the anaesthetist about any relevant medical problems, allergies and previous operations your child may have had.
- If your child has had a recent cough, cold or chicken pox, please let us know.
- The team will discuss any concerns or questions you may have, and will advise you of pain relief options for your child where needed.
- Occasionally we may need to delay a procedure to make it safer for your child, for example if they have a chest infection, or ate too recently.
- Some children may benefit from having medicine before they come to theatre to make them less anxious or scared. This can be discussed with your anaesthetist.

Going to "sleep"

- Before general anaesthetic is administered, you will be given the option to accompany your child to theatre. Please feel free to bring something that makes him/her feel comfortable, like a favourite blanket, book or a dummy. You are welcome to bring something to distract him/her while they go to sleep, like a favourite game or movie on your tablet or phone.
- The general anaesthetic is given either by injection or as gas to breathe. Your anaesthetist will discuss the best option for your child with you before coming to theatre. Please let the doctor/nurse know if your child has any preferences - some children have had procedures before and may prefer one over another.
- If your child decides to have the injected anaesthetic, the doctor/nurse will put local anaesthetic (numbing cream) onto the child's hands before you come to theatre.

- If the anaesthetic medicine is breathed in, we use a mask that fits over your child's mouth and nose. The smell of the gas can be likened to the smell of nail polish remover or felt-tip/koki pens, but it is not painful. This method takes a little longer to work and your child might become restless as they go off to sleep. This type of reaction is normal and the doctor/nurse will guide you through the process.
- We understand that not all parents/caregivers are able to come into theatre with their child. There is no pressure on you to come into theatre if you don't feel up to it. We are there to take care of your child for you.

During the procedure

- The anaesthetist will be with your child throughout the procedure, monitoring continuously and giving whatever fluid, medication and pain-relieving medicine they require.
- Your anaesthetist will discuss any special pain-relieving techniques that may be appropriate with you.

After the procedure

- When the procedure is finished, your child will be transferred to the recovery room. This is a large room where your child will wake up from the anaesthetic. A nurse closely looks after each child until they are fully awake and comfortable enough to return to you. You may be called to be with your child once s/he is more awake. Be aware that your child might seem confused by the unfamiliar environment and the effects of the medication and may not recognise you at first. This is common and will pass.
- When you get home, some children are a little more clingy than usual and have disturbed sleep patterns for a couple of days. Your reassurance is all that is required to ease them back to their normal self.



Side effects and complications

The most common side effects are mild, resolved quickly, and can be treated. These may include nausea (with or without vomiting), a sore throat and a headache. Your child might also feel "jetlagged" (tired) or generally out of sorts for a while.

More serious problems like allergic reactions to medication are rare and monitored for.

Any specific complication relating to your child's procedure will be discussed with you.

Risk

As with most medical procedures, no procedure can be guaranteed to be risk-free; however, modern anaesthetic techniques, medication, monitoring and training continue to make anaesthesia safer.

If you have any questions about your child's procedure, please feel free to raise them with your anaesthetist.