

PRE-OP GUIDANCE

Your anaesthetic assessment and consent

Before your operation you will meet your anaesthetist - a chance to check you are well prepared, answer your questions, and agree the anaesthetic plan together.

Before the day - getting ready

Depending on your operation and health, you may complete a health questionnaire, have tests (such as blood tests or an ECG), or attend a pre-admission clinic. It helps to have ready:

- A current list of all your medicines, including doses (and anything from the chemist or health-food shop)
- Any allergies or past reactions to medicines or anaesthetics
- Any previous problems you or close family have had with anaesthesia
- Your major medical conditions and any specialists you see

Meeting your anaesthetist

On the day, your anaesthetist will review your health, examine you if needed (often your heart, lungs and airway), and talk through the plan to keep you safe and comfortable. They will explain the type of anaesthesia suited to your operation - a general anaesthetic (fully asleep), a regional or spinal anaesthetic (numbing part of the body), sedation, or a combination - and how your pain will be managed afterwards.

Risks and questions

Every anaesthetic carries some risk. Most people have a smooth anaesthetic and serious problems are uncommon, but your anaesthetist will discuss the risks relevant to you and your operation. There are no silly questions. You might ask:

- What type of anaesthetic do you recommend for me, and why?
- How will my pain be managed after the operation?
- Are there any risks that particularly apply to me?
- How might I feel when I wake up, and how long will recovery take?

Consent

Consent means agreeing to go ahead once you understand what is involved. Your anaesthetist will give you the information you need and answer your questions so you can make a decision you are comfortable with. You can ask for more information at any time, and you can change your mind.

Bring your glasses, hearing aids and any interpreter needs to your assessment if relevant - it helps the conversation go smoothly.