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# General / Regional Anaesthesia



General

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## What is General Anaesthesia?

General Anaesthesia (GA) produces a state of controlled unconsciousness to facilitate surgery. While under GA, you will be completely asleep and will have no knowledge or memory of the surgery. GA can be administered either through inhaled gas or via intravenous medications.

Once you are under GA, a breathing tube will be inserted into your trachea or throat to assist you in breathing during the surgery. This tube is removed at the end of the operation. Most patients do not remember the breathing tube being in place, but may have a slight sore throat for the next 1 to 2 days.

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## What do I need to do before the surgery?

- Please stop smoking if possible.
- See a dentist if you have loose teeth as loose teeth can be dislodged during general anaesthesia and cause complications.
- Inform the hospital if you develop flu-like symptoms 1 to 2 weeks before your scheduled operation. Your operation may need to be postponed for your safety.
- If you are on any long-term medication, please inform the doctor so that he can advise you on which medicine(s) to stop or continue on the day of surgery.

## What do I need to do on the day of the surgery?

- It is important that your stomach is empty during the operation. You will be informed when to stop eating and drinking before surgery. Please follow these instructions strictly to avoid complications during the surgery.
- Take your medicine - as instructed by the doctor - with a small sip of plain water.
- Please be punctual when reporting for surgery.

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## What will happen during the surgery?

- A small tube will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand to deliver medications and fluids during the operation.
- The nurse will attach ECG leads on your chest, a BP cuff on your arm and a pulse oximeter on your finger.
- Your anaesthetist, who will remain with you throughout, will check and ensure that you are safe.

## What will happen after the surgery?

- You will be transferred to the Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU) for further care.
- From the PACU, you will then be transferred to a ward once you have sufficiently recovered from the surgery and anaesthesia.
- Do not drink alcohol, operate heavy machinery or drive for 24 hours after the operation.

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## What are the potential risks or complications associated with this procedure?

Although GA is generally safe, there are still some risks involved. Your risks are related to your general health and the type of

Common	Uncommon	Rare
Nausea and vomiting	Damage to teeth	Heart attack
Sore throat Hoarseness of voice	Slow breathing	Stroke
Shivering	Chest infection	Nerve damage
Itching	Unintentional awareness during surgery	Death
Minor cuts to lips or mouth	Worsening of existing medical condition	Serious allergy to drugs

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## What is Regional Anaesthesia?

Regional Anaesthesia (RA) is used to numb only a portion of your body undergoing the surgical procedure.

There are 2 forms of RA:

- Injections in your back to numb nerves emerging from your spinal cord
- Targeted injections to numb specific nerves around the site of surgery

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## How is the procedure conducted?

For some injections, a thin plastic tube is inserted at the same time. This allows further doses of medicine to be given to keep you comfortable for longer procedures or as a means of pain relief after the surgery.

Before giving any injections, your anaesthetist will ensure that the injection site is numb. While the doctor is giving the injection, please keep still. After the injection, you will experience numbness in the affected region.

The operation will only proceed when you and your anaesthetist confirm that the area is numb.

During the operation, you may be given some medicine to keep you calm and lightly sedated. Your anaesthetist will remain with you throughout the operation to ensure your well-being.

There will be numbness and weakness in the affected region even after surgery. Hence, please stay in bed until the numbness wears off. Ask for assistance in mobilising. The affected parts cannot sense temperature, so do be careful until you recover normal sensation.

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## What are the potential risks or complications associated with this procedure?

Common	Uncommon	Rare
Nausea and vomiting	Slow breathing	Heart attack
Bruising and soreness at site of injection	Worsening of existing medical condition	Serious allergy to drugs
Shivering	-	Stroke
Headache	-	Nerve damage
Bladder problems	-	Death
Itching	-	-

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## More Resources

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-i-xqLEEW6Y>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXScKvI310k>