

## How will my child be given anaesthesia?

Anaesthesia can be started in several ways. Most commonly in adults, anaesthesia is started by an intravenous injection which is very rapid. This is also a method that is used commonly for children. A special numbing cream is usually applied to your child's hand about 1-2 hours beforehand to reduce the worry about injections. Another method of beginning anaesthesia is to let your child breathe anaesthesia gas. With this approach, your child will be asked to breathe through a "space mask" quietly. The choice of which method to begin anaesthesia will be made by the Anaesthetist based on many factors, and after consultation with you and your child.

Although anaesthesia provides complete pain relief and loss of consciousness during the operation, it can occasionally have side effects. Different children may awaken at different rates. Some children may be fully alert upon arriving in the recovery room. Others may be sleepy for hours after the surgery. Nausea and vomiting are occasional side effects after surgery and anaesthesia.

Many different factors determine how your child will recover from anaesthesia and surgery, not the least being the type of surgery performed. If you have any concerns about your child's recovery, you should feel free to ask your Anaesthetist.

## How is the pain controlled after surgery?

The Anaesthetist may be consulted to help manage your child's pain following the surgery.

Although "pain killing" injections are still used, other forms of pain management may also be chosen to provide comfort. Simple oral medicines are often quite effective and other more powerful pain relievers can be used without the need for needles and injections; for example pain relieving suppositories.

Another approach for some types of surgery, is the use of caudal epidural injections of local anaesthetic (whilst your child is anaesthetised) near the "tail bone", which can have a numbing effect over the painful area. This can allow your child to have a much improved recovery with less need of other pain relieving medications.

## Will I be charged for the Anaesthesia service?

The Anaesthetist is a consulting specialist who evaluates your child before the operation, ensures safe, individualised anaesthesia during the entire surgery and provides pain relief following the operation.

Like other medical specialists, the Anaesthetist will charge for professional services, and this fee will be separate from the surgeon's fee or hospital's charge.

If you have any queries regarding fees, please feel free to contact the Anaesthetist's rooms for an estimate.

Estimated out of pocket expense for the anaesthesia service.

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Your Child and Anaesthesia



## When your Child needs Anaesthesia

A hospital visit can be an anxious time for you and your child. You both will meet many doctors, nurses and other people who will do their best to make your experience a positive one. Just as there are doctors who specialise in different aspects of a child's hospital care such as paediatricians and surgeons, there are doctors called Anaesthetists with special training in the anaesthesia care of children.



### Fasting

Fasting is essential for safe anaesthesia. As a general rule your child will need to fast from **all** food and milk drinks for 6 hours prior to their operation. Clear fluids such as blackcurrant juice or apple juice may be given to your child up to 3 hours before their operation.

Breast fed babies can be fed up to 4 hours before the operation.

### How can I as a parent help?

The Anaesthetist and the surgeon will do their best to make your child's visit to the hospital as pleasant as possible; however, you also have a key role to play in your child's care. It is important that you begin preparing your child for the operation as soon as a decision is made to perform surgery. Children tolerate surgery and anaesthesia better when they are well prepared. As with all of us, children have natural fears of the unknown. Anything you can do to relieve these anxieties and to inform your child about the coming events in the hospital and the operating room will greatly improve your child's experience.



### What do Anaesthetists do?

Anaesthetists are concerned with many aspects of child's care. Their main task is to provide safe, optimal conditions during surgery and to make the entire hospital stay as pleasant and comfortable as possible.

Anaesthetists consider any surgical procedure performed on your child to be of major importance. They are constantly on guard for changes in breathing, heart action, blood pressure or unexpected events which, although rare, may occur during surgery. Apart from assuring the optimal safety of your child during surgery, Anaesthetists are specially trained in how to make the operative procedure as comfortable as possible for your child. Anaesthetists know how children react to hospitals and surgery. As specialists, they work with other doctors such as paediatricians, surgeons and other consultants to improve the quality of your child's entire hospital stay.

You also meet Anaesthetists in other hospital areas. For example, if your child needs specialised radiological test including diagnostic scans, an Anaesthetist may well be present to provide anaesthesia or safe sedation for your child. Following surgery, Anaesthetists are often involved in providing pain relief for your child. Even if your child is not undergoing an operation, an Anaesthetist may be consulted for pain management, respiratory care and other medical situations.



The Anaesthetists' main task is to provide safe, optimal conditions during surgery and to make the entire hospital stay as pleasant and comfortable as possible

### Nothing calms a child more than a confident parent

Honesty is a key word. Your child should be told that he or she will be in unfamiliar surroundings but will meet many friendly doctors and nurses. Children need to know that they will have an operation and that there may be some discomfort afterwards. Let them know that you may not be with them every minute but will be waiting nearby.

Your composure as a parent is essential. Nothing calms a child more than a confident parent. Talk to your child about what to expect in the hospital such as corridors, hospital beds and the presence of other children. Reassure your child that everything done during the hospital stay will be explained beforehand.

### What will the Anaesthetist need to know?

The Anaesthetist will want to make sure that your child is in the best possible physical condition before surgery. You will be asked important questions about your child's general health, including whether he or she has allergies or asthma, and experiences with previous anaesthesia. During this evaluation, the Anaesthetist will explain the planned anaesthesia procedure. This is the best time for you and your child to ask questions and express any concerns to the Anaesthetist. Sometimes minor illness such as sniffles and colds cause problems during some types of surgery and anaesthesia. For this reason, the Anaesthetist may feel it is best to postpone surgery.

Remember, the Anaesthetist has your child's safety in mind.

Feel free to ask your Anaesthetist questions