

For further information please go to:

www.rcoa.ac.uk/childrensinfo

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Date published: 22/11/2021
Review date: 22/11/2023
Ref: SC/Dent/YCGADT/02

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Whittington Health
NHS Trust

Your child's general anaesthetic for dental treatment

Appointment for: _____

Whittington Hospital
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF

If you have to change this appointment, please call:
020 3224 4355 or 020 3316 8353



What is a general anaesthesia?

A General Anaesthetic (GA) ensures that your child is unconscious and free from pain during an operation or procedure. It is administered by specialist hospital doctors called Anaesthetists.

Why is my child having a general anaesthesia?

It is usually done when a child is young or nervous and needs a lot of treatment, and the dentist feels that the child would not be able to have the treatment awake.

How safe is general anaesthesia?

Serious problems are uncommon.

For a child in good health having minor surgery:

- 1 in 10 experience a headache or a sore throat.
- 1 in 10 experience sickness or dizziness.
- 1 in 5 become agitated on waking.
- 1 in 10,000 develop a serious allergic reaction.

The risk of death from anaesthesia for healthy children having minor surgery is less than 1 in 100,000.

How do I care for my child when we get home?

Your child may feel drowsy or unwell for some time after the anaesthetic, so he/she should be encouraged to rest and be kept under observation on the way home and the rest of the day at home.

Your child needs to be off school the following day.

How do I take care of the mouth?

1. Try to avoid any fingers in your child's mouth
2. Do not let your child rinse their mouth and spit out for the rest of the day.
3. Soft foods and drinks only are recommended for the evening/afternoon following the treatment; your child should be able to eat normally on the following day.
4. Avoid running around and/or playing on the day of the treatment.
5. Your child should not be in pain when leaving the hospital. However at home they may need some painkillers which can be whatever they usually have, following the instructions on the leaflet.
6. Do not brush your child's teeth on the evening of their treatment. However, brush normally the next day.

Bleeding

A little watery blood in the spit is normal, but if the hole where the tooth was removed is bleeding, place the gauze pack given to you over it and get your child to bite down for 10 minutes without removing the pack. If they cannot bite down you will have to hold it in place.

If bleeding does **NOT** stop, call **NHS 111** for professional advice, and contact your dental clinic the following day to let them know.

What will my child feel like?

When your child first wakes up he/she is likely to be a bit confused and may be tearful.

He/she will have been given local anaesthesia (numbing injection) near the teeth being treated. This sensation can feel strange and they may not like it.

He/she will normally be given a painkiller before and during the anaesthetic to help reduce the pain afterwards.

Most of the children settle quickly and can soon have a drink.

Some children have a breathing tube inserted through their nose during the anaesthetic, so do not be alarmed by any dry blood on the nostrils.

However if when you get home your child has a significant nose bleed that does not easily stop then you should attend the A&E at UCLH (University College London Hospital) or Barnet Hospital – (where they have specialist Ear Nose and Throat doctors).

AFTER THE ANAESTHETIC

When can I take my child home?

You will be able to take your child home as soon as the hospital staff considers that he/she has recovered enough. Generally the longer the anaesthetic takes, the longer the recovery time is.

Usually they will make sure your child has drunk, eaten and gone to the toilet before discharging him/her.

Once your child is ready to leave the hospital, please make sure you have private transport arranged to go home.

BEFORE THE ANAESTHETIC

What should I tell my child about the anaesthesia?

This will depend on the age of your child and how much you judge they can understand.

It may be enough to explain that some of their teeth are poorly and need to be removed before they cause pain.

You can explain that the doctor will give them some medicine which will make them go to sleep while their teeth are removed/ repaired. Afterwards they will wake up.

Older children may want to know more. Do encourage your child to talk about the operation. Books, games and stories can help. Our hospital may have play staff available on the ward that can give explanations and encourage discussion through play.

What should I do if my child is unwell?

If your child has a cough, cold, temperature or has either vomiting or diarrhoea then, for their own safety, the anaesthetic should be postponed until she/he is fit.

Please contact us in Tynemouth Road Dental Clinic to cancel the appointment: 0203 3224 4355

Or if it is a same day cancellation contact Switchboard at the Whittington Hospital: 020 7272 3070

Parking at Whittington Hospital:

Patient parking is extremely limited.

NIL BY MOUTH

Why is it important for my child not to eat or drink before the anaesthetic?

If there is food or liquid in your child's stomach during the anaesthetic, it can be dangerous.

If it is a morning appointment:

Your child MUST NOT EAT ANYTHING FOR 6 HOURS before their hospital appointment.

Your child must not eat after midnight. Your child can have SIPS OF PLAIN WATER up to 7.00 am

If it is an afternoon appointment:

Your child MUST NOT EAT ANYTHING FOR 6 HOURS before their hospital appointment.

Your child must not eat after 7.00 am. Your child can have SIPS OF PLAIN WATER up to 12.00 pm

A PARENT MUST ATTEND with the child.

Do not bring other children with you on the day

You may be at the hospital for up to six hours so you will need to arrange for other children to be looked after.

Remove any nail varnish, earrings and jewelry. Do not wear tight clothing.

Your child may bring their favourite doll or teddy bear to comfort them.

ON THE ANAESTHETIC DAY

You should expect to be at the hospital for about six hours. Time is needed to prepare your child for the anaesthetic and for your child to recover afterwards.

The nurses will take your child's temperature, weigh him/her and check that he/she has not had anything to eat or drink. The anaesthetist will talk to you about the anaesthetic. The dentist will talk to you about the dental treatment. If you have any questions please ask them.

How will my child go to sleep? Your child can either have:

- Anaesthetic gas to breathe through a mask
- An injection in the back of the hand.

The nurses will place anaesthetic cream ("magic cream") on your child's hands to make the skin numb.

You will be able to discuss how your child will go to sleep with the anaesthetist at the hospital.

Can I stay with my child while the anaesthetic is given?

One parent/carer will be able to stay in the anaesthetic room until your child is asleep. However, you are not able to stay with the child during their treatment.

How long will the treatment take?

The treatment itself takes between 45 minutes to an hour depending on how many teeth need treatment.

You will wait in the ward while they are asleep. You will be called into the recovery room once your child wakes up.