

What is a general anaesthetic?

It is a special sleep, so that you will not be awake for your treatment, and so you will not feel anything. A doctor called an anaesthetist helps you go to sleep and looks after whilst you are asleep. There is a large team of people looking after you whilst you are asleep.

Why do I need a general anaesthetic?

This option has been suggested by your orthodontist as a way for you to cope with your dental surgery.

Who needs to come with me when I have my general anaesthetic?

You will need to come with a parent or someone who is legally responsible for you. Someone can stay with you whilst you go to sleep.

Why shouldn't I eat or drink before my anaesthetic?

If you have food or drink in your stomach, you might be sick and this could be dangerous.

How will I go to sleep?

There are two ways. The usual way is for the anaesthetist to place a cannula (plastic tube) into a vein in the back of your hand. The medicine is then put into this and you go to sleep. Some numbing cream is put on the back of your hands beforehand to help with this. The other way is for you to breathe a mixture of gas and oxygen through a mask, this will gradually send you off to sleep.

What happens during my surgery?

Whilst you are asleep the surgeon will use local anaesthetic to numb up the areas of the mouth that are being treated. This helps to reduce pain and discomfort when you wake up.

If you are having dental extractions, you may notice some gaps where teeth have been removed. You may also have some stitches in place to help the gums heal. These will dissolve after a few days or weeks.

If you are having a tooth uncovered (exposure and bonding), you will notice a gold chain emerging through the gum. One end of the chain will be stuck to the buried tooth. The other end of the chain will either be connected to your brace or stitched to the gum if you do not have a brace. Please be careful not to snag or catch the chain.

What happens when I wake up?

You will be lying on a bed and a recovery nurse will be looking after you. You may feel dizzy and there may be some blood in your mouth. You will also have a clear plastic mask over your mouth and nose to give you some oxygen. Your parent or carer will be able to sit with you once you have woken up sufficiently.

Will my mouth hurt afterwards?

Your mouth will feel numb when you wake up. You may not be able to feel your lip and/or tongue until the local anaesthetic wears off, which may take some hours. You may feel uncomfortable as the local anaesthetic wears off and we will give you analgesics to relieve pain at the hospital. You should have some analgesics available at home and the medical team will be able to give you advice if required.

How else will I feel afterwards?

- You may feel tired, dizzy, and wobbly for a few hours after the treatment.
- You may feel some pain/discomfort as the local anaesthetic wears off.
- You may experience some bleeding
- You may experience some swelling depending on the treatment performed.
- You may experience sickness or nausea
- You will have a numb mouth and this feeling will disappear after a few hours
- You may have a mild sore throat
- You may have a bruised hand
- You may have an itchy nose

How soon can I have something to eat and drink?

You will be given something to eat and drink in the hospital, as you recover from the anaesthetic. Your mouth may be numb and so it is important to take care not to bite or burn yourself. It is important to avoid hot drinks to prevent bleeding.

When can I go home?

You will go home on the same day as the operation, as soon as the medical team is happy for you to leave. You will be given some written instructions and a mouth rinse when you are ready to leave. You must go straight home by car, unless you have agreed some other arrangements with the medical team.

What happens when I get home?

You must follow the written instructions given to you by the medical team. The instructions will tell you about recovering from an anaesthetic and how to look after your mouth. You should plan to have the next 24-48 hours at home, being looked after by a responsible adult

What are the risks?

When a patient is fit and healthy, the risk of a life-threatening problem during a general anaesthetic is approximately 1 in 350,000. Risk cannot be removed completely and all medical procedures, including anaesthetics have some risks. The hospital team is trained to keep you safe and cope with any complications that may arise. Please speak to the medical team if you have any concerns.

Are there any additional risks for people with medical problems?

Patient safety is our top priority, and you will have been carefully assessed to identify your needs before your operation. Treatment and safety precautions will be adapted to any special needs that you have. Please speak to the medical team if you have any concerns.

Who can I speak to?

The medical team aims to provide patients, parents and carers with sufficient information so that they can make the right choices. If you feel that you need more information or help, please contact the team on:

Orthodontics contact number (reception): 01752 432983

Orthodontics contact number (secretary): 01752 432927

Plym day case contact number (recovery): 01752 792142

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Patient Information Leaflet

Your General Anaesthetic and Dental Surgery

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