

### Before the anaesthetic

All children, who are able to understand, should be told that:

- They are going to hospital for a short while
- That they will be going to sleep and that they will be going home when they wake up
- That they will have some bad teeth taken out or mended

Everything should be explained to your child in a way that they can understand. Children who have been well prepared for their hospital appointment often cope far better on the day.

**Your child must not eat or drink before the anaesthetic.** If there is food or liquid in your child's stomach during the anaesthetic it could come back up into the throat and damage their lungs. This could be very dangerous. Please do not let your child have sweets or chewing gum either as these will fill the stomach with saliva and increase the risk of vomiting.

**If your child is unwell** it may not be possible to go ahead with the anaesthetic. If you have any doubts please contact the hospital or Community Dental Service for advice before attending for the appointment.

### **Community Dental Service**

Admin Office  
St George's Centre  
St George's Road  
Leeds  
LS10 4UZ  
Phone: 0113 392 9875  
Open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays)

### **Help us get it right**

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment, please let us know by speaking to a member of staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information you provide to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm or email [lch.pet@nhs.net](mailto:lch.pet@nhs.net)

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.**

## **Community Dental Service**

### **General Anaesthetic for Dental Treatment**



**Information for parents and  
guardians of children requiring  
dental treatment under general  
anaesthetic**

### **What is a general anaesthetic?**

General anaesthetics are the drugs (gases and injections) that are used to start and maintain anaesthesia, once the anaesthetic is stopped your child wakes up. Anaesthesia is a state of controlled unconsciousness during which your child feels nothing.

### **Why does my child have to go to hospital to have a general anaesthetic?**

Government regulations state that general anaesthesia for dental treatment may only be given in hospital where all appropriate safety facilities are available.

### **How safe is general anaesthesia for dental treatment and what are the risks?**

Serious problems are uncommon, but risk cannot be removed completely. When a patient is fit and healthy and the operation is a small one, as many dental operations are, the risk of a life-threatening problem is considerably low (about 1 in 400,000).

### **My child has disabilities or has special medical problems. Are there any extra risks with the anaesthetic?**

Yes, there may be a small increase in risk but this risk would be outweighed by the benefits of your child's treatment. Each child is different and will be carefully assessed before their operation so that the treatment is tailored to their needs. Sometimes children with serious medical problems may need to stay in hospital rather than go home the same day, this allows us more time for their operation and a longer recovery period afterwards.

### **Who gives the anaesthetic?**

Anaesthetics are given only by Anaesthetists - doctors with specialist training and experts at looking after patients when they are anaesthetised. The Anaesthetist stays with your child at all times during the operation and carefully monitors them.

### **How is the anaesthetic given?**

Your child will either have an injection into the back of the hand (a numbing cream is applied to the skin first) or anaesthetic gas to breath through a face mask. The options will be discussed with you and your child, but the final decision will be made by the anaesthetist.

If your child has had an anaesthetic before and would like to go to sleep in

the same way, or has previously had an unpleasant experience, please tell the anaesthetist.

### **Can I stay with my child before the anaesthetic is given?**

Yes, we encourage one parent or guardian to stay with the child. Your child will usually be laid on a trolley in the anaesthetic room to be anaesthetised. If your child is unhappy it is sometimes possible to start the anaesthetic with your child on your lap and then transfer them to the trolley once asleep, you will then be asked to return to the waiting room.

### **How long will my child be unconscious for?**

This will depend on the length of the operation. Simple removal of teeth may only take 30 minutes but anaesthetic and recovery time may mean that your child's total procedure takes 1-2 hours. If the operation takes more time your child will receive more anaesthetic and recovery will take a little longer.

### **Will I be there when my child regains consciousness?**

Once the operation is completed your child will be taken to the recovery room. A trained recovery nurse will look after your child and once they are responding to the nurse's voice you will be able to be with them again.

### **How will my child feel when waking?**

When your child first wakes up they are likely to be a little confused and may cry for a short time. Most children are upset by the taste of blood in their mouth and if local anaesthetic has been given they may not like the numb feeling. Your child will have been given pain-relieving medicine whilst they were asleep or on the ward before the operation, as soon as they can drink further medicine can be given if necessary.

### **How soon after waking will I be able to take my child home?**

After a short operation children can usually go home 2-3 hours later. For longer operations recovery will take longer but most children are able to go home within 4 hours.

### **Will my child have any after effects?**

It is common for children to:

- feel dizzy and possibly nauseous for a few hours
- be sick occasionally
- have some pain or discomfort for up to 24 hours and require pain-killers

Your child should stay off school/nursery the following day to recoup.