

your anaesthetic care



YOUR
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED



AGB

**ANAESTHETIC
GROUP
BALLARAT**

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The services of one of our anaesthetists have been requested for your surgery or procedure.

What is an Anaesthetist?

The anaesthetist is the doctor who will administer your anaesthetic. After finishing a basic medical degree, an anaesthetist spends many years of specialist training in anaesthesia, resuscitation and pain management. Your anaesthetist is a specialist just like the other specialists you may have seen, such as your surgeon, obstetrician or physician.

Preparing for Surgery

There are several things you can do to help make your anaesthesia easier and safer.

1. Fasting

- + It is essential that you have an empty stomach at the time of your anaesthetic. This is to reduce the risks and the chance of you feeling sick after your anaesthetic.
- + For these reasons you must not eat food or milk products for SIX HOURS before coming to hospital on the day of surgery.
- + You may drink clear fluids (water, cordial, strained fruit juices, black tea/coffee) up until TWO HOURS before coming to hospital.
- + If your child is having the anaesthetic and they are under 6 months old, please contact the Anaesthetic Group Ballarat for specific fasting instructions.
- + If you do not follow these rules your procedure may need to be postponed.

2. Medications

Unless given special instructions, continue to take all your usual prescribed medications up to and including the day of surgery.

Exceptions

- + On the morning of your surgery DO NOT take diuretic/water tablets (e.g. Lasix) OR diabetic tablets
- + If you take insulin, please seek advice from your diabetes educator, endocrinologist, or our practice nurse.
- + If you take strong blood thinners (e.g. Warfarin, Plavix, Iscover) please make sure your surgeon knows in advance. (Aspirin is usually OK)

3. Smoking

Stop smoking, or reduce as much as possible six weeks before surgery.

4. General Health

Take some moderate exercise (e.g. walking) for a few weeks before surgery and avoid excessive alcohol consumption.

Please contact us if you develop any infections in the days before your surgery (e.g. gastro, colds/flu)

Admission to hospital

When you come to hospital please remember to bring all your medications and any relevant x-rays.

Before your procedure, you will see your Anaesthetist who needs to assess your health and discuss details of the anaesthetic.

Your Anaesthetist may ask about previous operations and anaesthetics, current health problems, medications, allergies and your teeth.

Your anaesthetist may wish to listen to your chest with a stethoscope and examine your mouth.

Your Anaesthetist will then discuss with you your anaesthetic options. Any questions you wish to ask will be happily answered. Please note that at some stage you may be asked to remove some body piercings.

Types of Anaesthesia

Depending on the type of procedure, anaesthesia may be general, regional, local or sedation or a combination of these.

- + General anaesthesia involves a state of controlled unconsciousness for the period of the operation. This is achieved by the injection of drugs into an intravenous drip, and/or inhalation of anaesthetic gases.
- + Regional anaesthesia means that part of your body is made insensitive to pain. Examples are arm blocks, spinals and epidurals. It is achieved by injecting local anaesthesia around the nerves that supply the particular area of the body being operated on.
- + Local anaesthesia involves injection of similar drugs directly at the site of operation.
- + Sedation is commonly used for minor procedures (e.g. gastroscopy, colonoscopy) or in conjunction with regional or local anaesthesia. This will make you sleepy and relaxed.

After Surgery

After you wake up, you may experience some drowsiness, pain, sore throat, nausea, headache or short term memory loss. Medications will be given to help with these and they usually soon pass.

If you are returning home on the same day as surgery, arrange for an adult to accompany you home and remain with you until the next day. On the day of surgery you must avoid driving, operating machinery, alcohol consumption and signing important documents, as your judgement may be impaired. You may eat and drink as you wish unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.

Risks of Anaesthesia

No anaesthetic is without risk, but most patients do not suffer anaesthetic complications.

Other possible minor side effects include; vomiting, bruising, muscle aches, lip or tongue injury, damage to teeth/dentures, temporary breathing difficulties, temporary nerve damage, the possibility of some sensation during the operation.

Serious complications are fortunately very rare and include; serious allergic reactions, awareness during anaesthesia, heart attack, stroke, major nerve or blood vessel injury and damage to the lungs, liver, kidneys or other major organs.

Anaesthetists have extensive training in managing emergency situations.

After your surgery, if you experience any of the following serious symptoms, please contact us as soon as possible:

- + Severe back pain
- + Severe ongoing headache
- + Weakness/numbness of the legs causing unsteadiness when standing or walking
- + New problems with bladder or bowel control.

During work hours see “Contact Details”.

For urgent advice after hours please contact St John of God Hospital 5320 2111 and ask for the Anaesthetist on call to be contacted.

What is the cost?

The fees charged for the anaesthetic care you receive are separate to those fees charged by the hospital and your surgeon. This additional fee is individually assessed and based on the complexity of the anaesthetic plus the time taken for the procedure. For further details please consult our **Informed Financial Consent** document that accompanies this pamphlet.

Contact Details

If you have any questions either before or after your anaesthetic please contact the **Anaesthetic Group Ballarat** on **03 5331 4888** or visit our website at **www.agb.com.au**