

Anesthesia

Anesthesia is the use of medicines to prevent pain during surgery and other procedures. These medicines are called anesthetics.



Recovery from anesthesia

Recovery

After your operation, the anaesthetist will stop the anaesthetic and you'll gradually wake up. You'll usually be in a recovery room at first, before being transferred to a ward.

Depending on your circumstances, you'll usually need to stay in hospital for a few hours to a few days after your operation.

General anaesthetics can affect your memory, concentration and reflexes for a day or two, so it's important for a responsible adult to stay with you for at least 24 hours after your operation, if you're allowed to go home. You'll also be advised to avoid driving, drinking alcohol and signing any legal documents for 24 to 48 hours.



DEFINITIONS

- Recovery from anaesthesia may be defined as “a state of consciousness of an individual when he is awake or easily arousable and aware of his surroundings and identity” .



PHASES OF RECOVERY FROM ANAESTHESIA

Divided into 3 phases :

- Immediate recovery

This consists of return of consciousness, recovery of protective airway reflexes and resumption of motor activity. Usually lasts for a short time.

- Intermediate recovery

During this stage, the patient regains his power of coordination and the feeling of dizziness disappears. This stage usually lasts for 1 hr.



- Long-term recovery

There is a full recovery of coordination and higher intellectual function. May last for hours or even days



Complication and risk

Complications and risks

A number of more serious complications are associated with general anaesthetics, but these are rare.

Possible serious complications and risks include:

a serious allergic reaction to the anaesthetic (anaphylaxis)

waking up during your operation – the amount of anaesthetic given will be continuously monitored to help ensure this does not happen

death – this is very rare, occurring in around 1 in every 100,000 cases

Serious problems are more likely to occur if you're having major or emergency surgery, you have any other illnesses, you smoke, or you're overweight.

Your anaesthetist will discuss the risks with you before your operation. You should try to stop smoking or drinking alcohol in the weeks before surgery, as doing so will reduce your risk of developing complications.

You may also be advised to lose weight, and if you can you should increase your activity levels in the weeks before surgery, as this is likely to reduce your risk as well.

In most cases, the benefits of being pain-free during an operation outweigh the risks.



Side effects

feeling sick and vomiting – this usually occurs immediately, although some people may continue to feel sick for up to a day

shivering and feeling cold – this may last a few minutes or hours

confusion and memory loss – this is more common in elderly people or those with existing memory problems; it's usually temporary, but occasionally can be longer lasting

bladder problems – you may have difficulty passing urine

dizziness – you will be given fluids to treat this



bruising and soreness – this may develop in the area where you were injected or had a drip fitted; it usually heals without treatment

sore throat – during your operation, a tube may be inserted either into your mouth or down your throat to help you breathe; afterwards, this can cause a sore throat

damage to the mouth or teeth – a small proportion of people may have small cuts to their lips or tongue from the tube, and some may have damage to their teeth; you should tell your anaesthetist about any dental work you have had done



Nurses role

