

## Preparing for Surgery

### Before surgery

- Please stop smoking if possible
- See a dentist if you have loose teeth as loose teeth can be dislodged during a general anaesthetic and cause complications
- Inform the hospital if you develop flu-like symptoms 1 - 2 weeks before your scheduled operation. Your operation may need to be postponed for your safety
- If you are on any long-term medication, please inform the doctor so that he can advise you on which medicine(s) to stop or continue on the day of surgery

### On the day of surgery

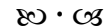
- It is important that your stomach is empty during your operation. You will be informed when to stop eating and drinking before surgery. Please follow these instructions strictly to avoid complications during the surgery
- Take your medicine as instructed by the doctor with a small sip of plain water
- Please be punctual when reporting for surgery

### In the operating theatre

- A small tube will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand to deliver medications and fluids during your anaesthetic
- Your anaesthetist, who remains with you throughout, checks and ensures you are safe

### After the surgery

- You will be transferred to the Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU) for further care
- From PACU, you will be transferred to the ward once you have sufficiently recovered from the surgery and anaesthesia
- Do not drink alcohol, operate heavy machinery or drive for 24 hours after your operation



## General Anaesthesia (GA)

GA produces a state of controlled unconsciousness to facilitate surgery. While under a GA, you will be completely asleep and will have no knowledge or memory of the surgery. GA can be administered either through inhaled gas or via intravenous medications.

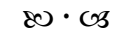
Once you are under a GA, a breathing tube will be inserted into your trachea or throat to assist you in breathing during surgery. This tube is removed at the end of the operation. Most patients do not remember the breathing tube being in place, but may have a slight sore throat for the next 1-2 days.

### Risks and complications

Although GA is generally safe, there are still some risks involved. Your risks are related to your general health and the type of surgery.

### GA risks and complications

Common	Uncommon	Rare
Nausea and vomiting	Damage to teeth	Heart attack
Sore throat	Slow breathing	Stroke
Shivering	Chest infection	Nerve damage
Itching	Unintentional awareness during surgery	Death
Minor cuts to lips or mouth	Worsening of existing medical condition	Serious allergy to drugs



## Regional Anaesthesia (RA)

RA is used to numb only a portion of your body undergoing the surgical procedure.

There are two forms of RA:

- Injections in your back to numb nerves emerging from your spinal cord
- Targeted injections to numb specific nerves around the site of surgery

For some injections, a thin plastic tube is inserted at the same time. This allows further doses of medicine to be given to keep you comfortable for longer procedures or as a means of pain relief after the surgery.

Before giving any injections, your anaesthetist will ensure that the injection site is numb. While the doctor is doing the injection, please keep still. After the injection, you will have a warm tingling feeling in the affected region.

Your operation will only proceed when you and your anaesthetist confirm that the area is numb.

During the operation, you may be given some medicine to keep you calm and lightly sedated. Your anaesthetist will remain with you throughout the operation to ensure your well-being.

There will be numbness and weakness in the affected region even after surgery. Hence, please stay in bed until the numbness wears off. Ask for assistance in mobilising. The affected parts cannot sense temperature, so do be careful until you recover normal sensation.

### RA risks and complications

Common	Uncommon	Rare
Nausea and vomiting	Slow breathing	Heart attack
Bruising and soreness at site of injection	Worsening of existing medical condition	Serious allergy to drugs
Shivering		Stroke
Headache		Nerve damage
Bladder problems		Death
Itching		



#### For enquiries

If you require further information, please contact the Anaesthesia Outpatient Consultation Clinic (AOCC) at (65) 6772 6268 or [appointment\\_aocc@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment_aocc@nuhs.edu.sg).

Alternatively, information videos can be viewed at <https://www.nuh.com.sg/patients-and-visitors/specialties/anaesthesia/patient-information.html>.

Information is correct at time of printing (October 2016) and subject to revision without prior notice. For updated information, visit [www.nuh.com.sg](http://www.nuh.com.sg)

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions.

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# General / Regional Anaesthesia

