

An Easy Read booklet



# Having a general anaesthetic



If you are ill, your doctor may say you need some tests or an operation to help you get better.



Because some people find tests frightening or because they might hurt, the doctor or nurse may decide you need a general anaesthetic.

This means you are given medicine to make you go to sleep so you do not feel anything.



This leaflet will tell you what happens when you have a general anaesthetic.



On the day of your test or operation, you will have to stop eating and drinking a few hours before you come into hospital. Your carer will tell you what time you can eat and drink until.



You may feel hungry or thirsty.  
But it is **very important** that you do not eat or drink anything, including sweets or chewing gum.



When you arrive at the hospital you and your carer will go straight to the ward or surgical reception. Your carer will be told where the ward is and what it is called, or where to find surgical reception.



A nurse will take you to a bed and will ask you to undress and put on a hospital gown. The nurse will pull the curtains around the bed to make it private for you.



The nurse will then ask you and your carer some questions and will put a plastic bracelet on you. This has important information on and it should be worn all the time.





A doctor called an anaesthetist (an anaesthetic is a drug that sends you to sleep) will then come and see you on the ward.

He or she will ask you some more questions and will answer any questions you or your carer may have.



You or your carer may be asked to sign a form to say you want to have the test or operation and the anaesthetic.



The nurse or doctor will then rub a special cream on the back of one of your hands. This is so you won't feel the needle he or she will use to give you the anaesthetic drug. It won't hurt although your hand may feel tingly.



You will then wait on the ward until you are ready to have your test or operation. It is important that you still don't eat or drink anything.



When it is time for your test or operation, you and your carer will be taken to the treatment room. You may be asked to walk or sit in a wheelchair or you may be taken there on a trolley.



In the treatment room, the doctor will talk to you and will put a very thin plastic tube in the back of your hand with a needle.

This is where the cream was rubbed so it will not hurt.



The doctor will put the drug to make you sleep in through the tube in your hand.



You will feel sleepy very quickly and will soon be fast asleep. If you want, your carer can stay with you until you are asleep.



When you wake up, the test or operation will be finished. You will wake up in a big room with a nurse looking after you. You will stay here until you wake up properly. If you want, your carer will also be waiting for you here.



If you feel sick or frightened, tell the nurse - he or she can help you.



When you are more awake, a nurse and a porter will take you back to the ward on a trolley. Your carer will come with you too.





On the ward, the nurses will look after you and check your pulse and blood pressure to make sure you are feeling ok.



If you are feeling hungry, the nurse can bring you something to eat or drink, like tea and toast.



You will be able to go home once you are better, this might be the same day or you might have to stay in hospital overnight for a few days.



If you need help in hospital ask one of the nurses or contact PALS on 01892 632953 or 01622 224960.

## Thanks to the West Kent Valuing People Now & Aspens Charities for their support in reviewing this leaflet.

Valuing people

Now in West Kent



Thanks to  easy on the **i** for the use of their image bank © LYPFT  
[www.easyonthei.nhs.uk](http://www.easyonthei.nhs.uk)



Content courtesy of Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Pictures from Photo symbols

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

**NHS 111**

**NHS Choices online**



 **111**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.**

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:**

**Telephone:**  01622 224960 or  01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records.

If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

Issue date: August 2020  
Database reference: RWF-SUR-GS-LEA-PAT-8

Review date: August 2024  
© MTW NHS Trust

Disclaimer: Printed copies of this document may not be the most recent version.  
The master copy is held on Q-Pulse Document Management System  
This copy – REV1.0