



ANZCA
FPM

**ANAESTHESIA
AND CHILDREN**

PATIENT INFORMATION 1

Anaesthesia for your child

Children of all ages, including newborn babies, may require anaesthesia. Your child's age; illness or developmental concerns; and the nature of the procedure all make a difference to what skills and experience are required by medical staff and the type of hospital needed to ensure your child will receive the care they need.

Where can my child have a procedure under anaesthesia?

Most hospitals will have set patient age limits while others may not perform surgery or procedures on children at all. Routine procedures, such as tonsillectomy, grommets, or dental treatment may take place in many hospitals and day-surgery units that are set up for children. But children who are very young, have complex multiple illnesses, and/or who require major surgery are likely to be cared for in a larger hospital with children's services or a children's hospital.

Who will look after my child during anaesthesia?

Anaesthetists are highly qualified specialist doctors with unique clinical knowledge and skills. Their role is to ensure your child's safety and comfort. The anaesthetist will meet you before the procedure to get to know you and your child and anything about the care that is important to either of you. They will stay with your child to observe and monitor them closely throughout their anaesthesia.

What types of anaesthesia can be used for children?

Most children will be anaesthetised with medications that put them into a carefully controlled state of unconsciousness where they are not aware of what happens during the procedure until the medications are stopped. This is called general anaesthesia (GA) and, to them, this will feel like a deep sleep. General anaesthesia can be supplemented by local anaesthetic medicine which, when injected into a specific area, will make the operated area numb so your child is as comfortable as can be on waking up. Other medicines may be given or prescribed to help your child feel ready to drink or eat after waking.

What can I do?

It is very helpful for your child if they know what is going to happen in the hospital. Be prepared to answer their questions and focus on the good reasons for having the procedure. Bring along any items such as toys or devices that will help make your child feel more comfortable during their hospital stay.



As the leading authority on anaesthesia in Australia and New Zealand, ANZCA provides accessible, evidence-based information designed to help you make informed decisions. Scan the QR code to visit our website anzca.edu.au. This information is a guide only and should not replace information supplied by your anaesthetist.