



ANZCA
FPM

PATIENT INFORMATION

Anaesthesia and having a baby

Being pregnant and giving birth involves temporary but major changes in our bodies. Discomfort or pain during labour is common and some women will require surgery while pregnant. You might not need the care of an anaesthetist when you're carrying and delivering your baby, but it's good to know what your options are.

Can I have anaesthesia when I'm pregnant?

Surgery can be performed during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Your anaesthetist will assess you and tailor your treatment to your individual needs. They'll also be happy to talk you through the process and answer any questions you have.

How do I manage discomfort during labour?

Your midwife and obstetrician will help you to manage mild and moderate birthing pain. But if you need stronger, longer lasting relief or require a caesarean delivery they will need to ask an anaesthetist to join your birthing team. Anaesthetists are available at major hospitals, but if you're planning to have your baby at a smaller hospital, you should check with your midwife or GP.

How soon can I breastfeed after having anaesthesia?

You'll usually be able to have skin-to-skin contact with your baby straight away, and start breastfeeding as soon as you feel ready.

Will I need post-natal pain relief?

You may require pain medication after giving birth. Most pain medication will be OK to take while breastfeeding, but your birthing team will discuss this with you at the time.

Did you know...?

Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are two of the safest places to have a surgical procedure involving anaesthesia, and our anaesthetists are among the most highly trained specialist doctors on the planet.



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As Australasia's leading authority on anaesthesia, 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.