



ANAESTHETICGROUPBALLARAT

## On the Day of Your Procedure

When you have any sort of anaesthetic—even a local—it is important that your stomach is empty. This is to reduce the slight risk of your stomach contents regurgitating and entering your lungs with serious consequences. Also you are less likely to feel sick or vomit after your anaesthetic. It is for these reasons that you must not eat or drink for several hours before your procedure.

Our current requirements are:

### Adults and Children

No food or milk for **6 hours** before the procedure  
Clear fluids up until **2 hours** before the procedure

### Children less than 6 weeks old

Breast milk (not formula) may be taken up to 4 hours before the procedure.  
Clear fluids up until **2 hours** before the procedure

### Medications

Most medications should be taken as usual with a sip of water on the day of surgery. Common exceptions are diabetic medications—see below—and diuretics—water tablets—which are best omitted.

You should inform your surgeon if you are taking any drugs that affect blood clotting for example PLAVIX/ISCOVER, TICLID/TICLODIPINE, warfarin, aspirin or anti-inflammatory drugs when your surgery is booked as these drugs may increase bleeding. They may need to be stopped days or weeks before.

## Diabetics

If you are on diabetic tablets, **DO NOT** take them on the morning of your procedure.

If you are using insulin and your case is in the morning, do not take any insulin. We will check your BSL on arrival and make any adjustments required.

If your case is in the afternoon, have a normal early breakfast before 7:30am and half your normal insulin dose.

If you are on an INSULIN PUMP, if your diabetes is particularly unstable or if you are concerned that these instructions will cause problems for your diabetic control, please contact our office on 5331 4888 before your procedure date.

## Breastfeeding

Follow the fasting instructions above, but try to have some fluids right up to the 4 hours before your procedure time.

When you see your anaesthetist, please tell him/her that you are lactating as we can avoid any drugs that may cause problems (very few) and if necessary give extra fluids intravenously. The drugs used in anaesthetics these days are very safe for the breastfeeding baby; at most they may cause some sleepiness for a few hours. If you are concerned, or your procedure will take some time, you can express milk before your operation for the baby to have during your procedure or while you are waking up.

## What to Bring

For same day surgery please bring:

- ~ A responsible adult—you must not drive yourself home after any procedure and we strongly recommend that you arrange someone to be close by for the first 12 hours after your anaesthetic
- ~ All your medications—or a list
- ~ Your consent form from the surgeon if you have it
- ~ Any relevant X-rays that you have
- ~ Your Medicare/private insurance details

All theatre garments will be provided but slippers may be useful  
Perhaps a book to read

It is better not to wear any make-up and remove any jewellery or body piercing if possible

## **If You Are Unwell**

If you develop an acute illness such as a severe cold or gastroenteritis, please contact us or your surgeon as soon as possible. It may be better and safer for you or your child to postpone their procedure. Some complications are more likely if you are unwell and there is the risk of transmitting your infection to other patients in the hospital.

## **At the Hospital or Day Centre**

### **Admission**

The hospital you are booked with will provide details about where and when you need to attend. On arrival you will need to fill in a form about your personal details, contact numbers, Medicare/insurance details and general health details.

Some details—especially your name, your surgeons' name, what operation you are having and on which side—will be asked several times. This is just our routine way of ensuring that mistakes don't happen.

### **Meeting your Anaesthetist**

Before your procedure you will have a consultation with your Anaesthetist. Depending on which institution you are in and the type of admission, this may be in your ward, an interview room in the day ward or the reception area of the theatre.

This consultation may sometimes appear brief—especially if you are healthy—but your Anaesthetist needs to assess your general level of fitness and discuss the options, risks and benefits for your anaesthetic. You can then choose what type of anaesthetic you want, or your Anaesthetist can choose for you if you prefer.

## What I need to tell my Anaesthetist

To assess your general health, your Anaesthetist will want to know about:

- ~ Previous operations and anaesthetics, especially any problems experienced
- ~ Any history of chronic illnesses—especially heart and lung disease, diabetes, hypertension
- ~ Medications you are taking—this includes prescribed, herbal and recreational drugs, cigarettes and alcohol
- ~ Problems with heartburn or indigestion
- ~ Abnormal reactions or allergies to drugs
- ~ If you have any dental work or loose teeth
- ~ If you have difficult veins

Depending on these questions your Anaesthetist may wish to examine your heart, lungs and mouth.

Please be honest with these questions; our objective is to provide the safest service we can for you.

Your Anaesthetist will discuss the risks and benefits of any planned anaesthetic technique. Please refer to “Complications and Risks” for further information.

## Premeds

In the past "Premeds" were commonly given before surgery to sedate and reduce anxiety. Unfortunately it was found that these premed injections often increased side effects after anaesthesia and slowed patients' recovery from anaesthesia.

These days, many procedures are done as day cases allowing you to go home as soon as possible after your procedure. Also, by coming in to hospital just before your operation and by being better informed, we find that people tend to be less anxious. As such, sedative premed medications are rarely given unless people are excessively anxious.

We do commonly prescribe other drugs such as painkillers to help with post-operative pain relief and antacids to make general anaesthesia safer.

If you are particularly worried about needles, you can request cream be applied before coming to theatre which will numb the skin. This is routinely used with children but takes 1–2 hours to work well.

## **Getting Ready to go to Theatre**

When it is close to the time for your operation, the nursing staff will ask you to get changed and advise what underwear you can leave on. Usually you will wear a theatre gown. All jewellery and body piercing should be removed if possible—those that can't may be taped over for your protection. A wristband with your name may be placed around your wrist.

You can wear your glasses, hearing aids and dentures until you are in the theatre; for many operations you can leave your dentures in for the whole procedure.

To get to the theatre you will either walk or be pushed in a wheelchair, trolley or hospital bed. One of the nurses will go with you.