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A10lite General Anaesthetic (Child)

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at any Western Australian public hospital for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:

This document will give you information about a general anaesthetic. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a general anaesthetic?

A general anaesthetic is a combination of drugs that causes deep sleep. It is used for operations or procedures as it causes a loss of sensation. Your child will not be aware of what is happening and afterwards will not remember anything that has happened.

How is a general anaesthetic given?

Most older children are sent to sleep by injecting the anaesthetic through a drip (small tube) in a vein. The injection takes about 30 seconds to work. Some children prefer to go to sleep by breathing an anaesthetic gas through a face mask. This technique is more common in younger children and babies.

Are there any alternatives to a general anaesthetic?

For certain procedures, such as a scan, your child may be able to have sedation. For smaller operations, your anaesthetist may consider a local anaesthetic injected near the area of surgery. The options depend on how mature your child is and their ability to stay calm and still.

What complications can happen?

1 Minor complications

- Feeling or being sick
- Sore throat
- Behavioural changes
- Dental damage

2 Serious complications

- Nerve injury
- Slow or irregular heartbeat
- Cardiac arrest (where the heart stops working)
- Breathing problems
- Allergic reaction

How will my anaesthetist know that my child is really asleep?

Your anaesthetist continuously monitors the amount of anaesthetic in your child's body to reduce the risk of your child being aware of what is happening.

Summary

A general anaesthetic is usually a safe and effective way for your child to have an operation or procedure. Most children do not have any problems.

Acknowledgements

Author: Dr James Armstrong FRCA and Dr Iain Moppett DM MRCP FRCA

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.