

# Having a General Anaesthetic



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

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



Some people find operations or tests frightening as it 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.

You need to follow these instructions before your operation or test.

**If you are having a morning operation:**

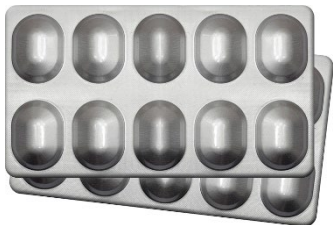
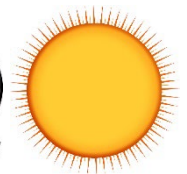


- No food or milk **after 3am**



- Clear fluids are ok **until 7am**

- water
- black tea
- black coffee



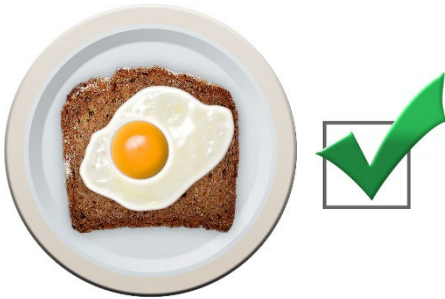
Your pre assessment nurse will tell you when you need to stop your medications.



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

If you are sick when you are asleep it can make you ill.

**If you are having an afternoon operation:**

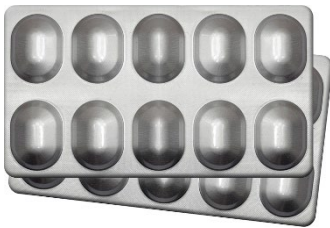


- Have a light breakfast **before 8am**



- Clear fluids are ok **until 11am**

- water
- black tea
- black coffee



Your pre assessment nurse will tell you when you need to stop your medication.



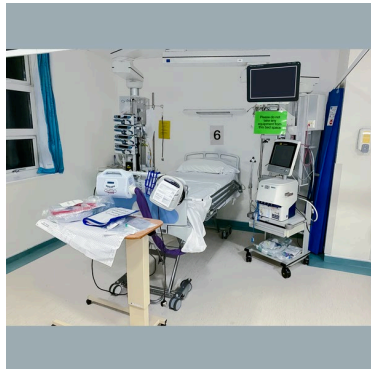
You may feel hungry or thirsty. It is very important that you do not eat or drink anything, including sweets or chewing gum.

If you are sick when you are asleep it can make you ill.



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

This is the **consent form**.



You will 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 the person supporting you will be taken to the anaesthetic room.



You can take someone with you and they can stay with you until you are asleep.



The anaesthetist will talk to you.

They will put a very thin plastic tube in the back of your hand with a needle.



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.



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, the person supporting you will also be waiting for you there.



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

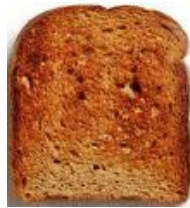




When you are more awake, a nurse and a porter will take you back to the ward on a bed.



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.



If you have had an operation you will probably stay on the ward for a day or two.



You will be able to go home once the nurses are happy that you are well enough.

## For 24 hours after your anaesthetic



- drink lots of fluid
- eat light food



- Make sure you have an adult or the person supporting you stay with you for 24 hours after you go home

## The effects of the anaesthetic can last for up to 24 hours.

It can make:



- you sleepy
- it difficult to concentrate

## For the next 24 hours, please do not:



- drive a car
- ride a motorbike or bicycle
- lock any doors
- make important decisions



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## References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email [patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk)

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