



## ANAESTHETIC RISK INFORMATION

When you sign your consent for operation and anaesthetic you are making a declaration that you have read this information sheet given to you prior to your admission. We understand when you sign a consent form that you have had the opportunity to ask questions, understand what you have read and are not signing under duress.

Your anaesthetist will be happy to answer any questions you have about your anaesthesia prior to your operation. He/she will meet with you before your procedure to discuss your health, general medical condition and any previous anaesthesia.

The anaesthetist will want to know:

1. How healthy you are and whether you have had any recent illnesses, with a particular focus on heart or respiratory problems.
2. What previous operations you have had and whether there were any problems with anaesthesia.
3. If you have had any abnormal reactions to any medications and whether you have any allergies.
4. Whether you have a history of reflux or heartburn, asthma, bronchitis, heart problems or any other medical conditions.
5. Whether you are currently taking any drugs, prescribed or complimentary-including cigarettes and alcohol-and whether you are taking an oral contraceptive pill. Please bring a list of your current medications.
6. If you have any loose, capped or crown teeth, have 'veneers' or 'bonding' or wear dentures or plates.

You will be seen by a nurse prior to seeing the anaesthetist who will have a few questions regarding your medical and medication history.

Answer all questions honestly; it is all about minimising risk to you.

There are risks associated with every operation and every anaesthetic and are outlined as follows:

### ALLERGY

Allergic reactions to modern anaesthetic agents are rare; incidence is roughly 1:10,000. Any bad reaction should be reported to your anaesthetist prior to surgery.

### ASPIRATION

Stomach contents may enter air passages resulting in a lack of oxygen to the brain.

Patients are required to FAST for a minimum of 6 hours prior to surgery to minimise this

risk. This means nothing to eat, drink, smoke or chew. A sip of water may be taken with your usual daily medications unless advised otherwise.

### SPASM

The airways may contract under general anaesthetics. This occurs more commonly with obese people who are given light anaesthetics. Spasm of the lower airways is more common in asthmatics and people with respiratory infections. Smoking will increase your overall risk of anaesthesia. If you are a regular or heavy smoker, or if you have had a cigarette on the morning of your procedure, please tell the anaesthetist.

### AWARENESS

During light anaesthetics patients may be aware of the procedure taking place. Sedation is anaesthetic without loss of consciousness. Awareness is a rare complication of a general anaesthetic.

### NAUSEA/VOMITING

This can be common after some anaesthetics and rare after other types. Even with the use of modern medications, a small percentage of patients may experience nausea and vomiting that is difficult to control. If you have had any difficulties in the past, please let the anaesthetist know.

### BRUISING

Pain on injection or bruising from the cannula site may occasionally happen.

### FAMILIAL PROBLEMS

Rare syndromes such as malignant hyperthermia exist that run in families whereby patients react badly with some anaesthetic agents. Any bad family reaction or death of a family member following an anaesthetic should be discussed with the anaesthetist.

### FITTING

Some anaesthetic agents may increase the risk of epileptic type fits. Please tell your anaesthetist if you have or have ever had a seizure or fit.

### DENTURES/CONTACT LENSES/TONGUE STUDS

The anaesthetist should be aware of these.

### MEDICATIONS

Report any regular medications as these may interact with the anaesthetic.

### DEATH

This is an extremely remote risk; please try to keep this in perspective. Remember most anaesthetics are comfortable and trouble free. More information about anaesthesia and anaesthetists can be found in the patients section on the ASA (Australian Society Anaesthetists) website: [www.asa.org.au](http://www.asa.org.au)