University College Hospital

Special Care Dentistry
You and your dental general anaesthetic

Name: ...........................................

Hospital number: .................

Date of treatment ....................

Time: ...........................................

Location: Day Surgery Unit
Second Floor
University College Hospital
235 Euston Road
NW1 2BU

This is your confirmed appointment, you will not receive another letter from the hospital.
Introduction

You need a general anaesthetic to help the dentist take a look at your teeth and do any dental treatment needed. The dentists may clean your teeth, put in any fillings you need and take out any teeth that can’t be saved.

This leaflet explains what will happen before your treatment and on the day of surgery.

It is usual for two patients to be scheduled for treatment in one afternoon. On the day of the surgery you may be asked to wait on the ward until it is time for your procedure.

You will go home the same day and will not be staying overnight. You can expect to be in hospital up to 19:00.

Please note that if you are unwell, including a cough, cold, blocked nose and/or have a temperature, it will not be possible for you to have your procedure.

In this case please phone and cancel your appointment as soon as possible by contacting:

9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.  **GA Coordinator / PA: 0203 456 1264**  
**Special Care Dept.: 0203 456 1175**

This will allow us to offer your appointment to another Patient.
Before your anaesthetic

If you feel unwell before you come into hospital or if you’re general health changes please call us. The contact details are listed above.

Escort
• You must be accompanied to and from hospital by a responsible adult who is able to stay with you overnight. Without this, we will not be able to proceed.

Transport
• You can come to the hospital via public transport but you will need to go home by taxi or car.
• If you need hospital transport to bring you to hospital and take you home, please contact them directly.
  UCLH Transport Department: 020 3456 7010

Clothing
• Please wear loose clothing and bring a change of clothing, including underwear.

Consent
• This is normally discussed before the day of surgery.
• If you have been given a consent form to take home and discuss with family / carers, please ensure that it is appropriately signed and bring it with you on the day of surgery.
• Without a completed consent form the procedure cannot be undertaken.

Reducing anxiety
• If you are very anxious about coming in on the day, please make an appointment with your General Practitioner (GP).
• The doctor may be able to prescribe some medicine to help you feel calmer on the day.

Eating & Drinking
• You should have a light breakfast before 07:00.
• After this you should not eat anything but you can drink only water until 11:00.
• Do not eat or drink anything after 11:00.
• Your operation maybe cancelled if you do not follow these instructions
Medicines
- Please take your regular morning medicine with a small amount of water unless asked not to by the anaesthetist.
- Please bring your medication with you on the day of treatment.

On the Day of Surgery
- Please arrive at the Day Surgery Ward (T2) by 12:00p.m.
- Avoid bringing any valuables with you to the hospital.
- If you have any items that you particularly enjoy playing with or find relaxing then please bring those with you on the day.
- Here a nurse will take you to your cubicle and may take your blood pressure and pulse.
- They will then put a plastic identity bracelet on your wrist or ankle.
- You can stay in your own clothes for the anaesthetic and dental treatment.

Preparation for the General Anaesthetic
- An anaesthetist will see you again on the ward to check that you are still okay to proceed with the anaesthetic and answer any questions you may have.

Local anaesthetic cream
- The nurse will apply some local anaesthetic cream to the backs of your hands or arms over your veins and cover with a clear dressing.
- This cream stays on for 30 minutes to one hour.
- It numbs the skin so that when we insert a small plastic tube into the vein (a cannula) it is not too uncomfortable.

Reducing Anxiety
- If you are anxious we can give you some medicine to help. It can either be given as syrup or sprayed into the nose.
Going to Theatre

- Your relative or carer can come with you to the anaesthetic room.
- The anaesthetist and nurse may attach some monitors to you to check your blood pressure and pulse.

The General anaesthetic

Your anaesthetist will have discussed the two options with you and your relative/carer before coming to the anaesthetic room.

1. A small plastic tube (cannula) will be inserted into a vein in your hand or arm. This should not be too uncomfortable as you will have had the local anaesthetic cream applied before-hand. The anaesthetic will be given through the cannula.

   And/ Or

2. You will be given gas and oxygen to breathe through a clear plastic mask which fits over your mouth and nose.

You will be asleep during your treatment. The anaesthetist will stay with you throughout the procedure and will take you to the recovery room where you will wake up.

If at any stage of your procedure, either when going to sleep or waking up, you become agitated and we are worried that you may hurt yourself or the staff we may briefly wrap a blanket around your arms or legs to stop you harming yourself.

Recovery Room

- There will be a nurse looking after you in the recovery room and you will stay here until you have woken from the general anaesthetic.
- You will then return to the ward where your relative/carer will be able to remain with you until you are OK to go home
- The dentist will visit you to let you know what has been done
- They will tell you how to look after your mouth after your treatment.
- Sometimes you will be advised to rest at home for a few days after your treatment.
At home

Eating and drinking
- Avoid hot food and drinks for the first 24 hours as they may encourage bleeding and may burn your mouth if you are numb
- It is best to eat soft foods for the first 2 days after your dental treatment, for example pasta, mashed potatoes, yoghurt
- You will be able to eat and drink as normal as your mouth recovers.
- The time taken for this is different for every one and we will go through this again in the ward before you leave

Long term care
- Make an appointment with your regular dentist for review in 3-4 weeks after treatment
- Continue taking all your prescribed medicine as normal
- Further advice / help after discharge:
  9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.  GA Coordinator / PA: 0203 456 1264
  Special Care Dept.: 0203 456 1175

Common Side Effects of Dental Treatment under General Anaesthesia

Nausea and vomiting
- If you feel sick the recovery nurses and anaesthetist can give you medicines to treat this.

Sore throat or nose
- When you are asleep the anaesthetist will put a soft breathing tube into your nose. For this reason you may experience a sore nose, sore throat or a small amount of bleeding from the nose.

Sore mouth
- The dentist will give you local anaesthetic when you are asleep so your mouth may feel numb for up to 5 hours.
- The anaesthetist gives you painkillers when you are asleep but if it is still sore when you wake up, we can give you more.
- The dentists will prescribe painkillers for you to take home if you need them
• Your teeth may feel sensitive after your treatment. This can last for a few days but gets better as your mouth heals.

Shivering
• Shivering can be a side effect of the anaesthetic medicines and can occur even if you are not cold.

Bruising
• You may have some bruising of your skin around the site of any blood tests or where your drip/cannula was placed.
• You may have bruising on cheek, and face after dental extractions.

Infection
• To prevent infection and speed up healing, you should keep your mouth as clean as possible.
• The dentists will prescribe you some antibacterial mouthwash to use the day after your treatment. Use this for a week after your treatment.
• They will also prescribe you antibiotics to take at home if you need them.
• Starting the day after your treatment, clean your mouth and teeth with a soft brush or sponge sticks.
• The sponge sticks can be used for the first week when your mouth may be sore.

Bleeding and stitches
• There may be some light bleeding from the area. This is common for the first 24 hours after dental extraction.
• Some of the bleeding will be from the gums after they have been cleaned.
• If a tooth / teeth are taken out, stitches are put in to reduce bleeding.
• The stitches do not have to be removed as they will dissolve on their own in 2-4 weeks.

Swelling
• Swelling after dental extractions is common. Swelling usually lasts for about a week.

Damage to Teeth
• A large filling can dislodge during surgery. If this happens further treatment will be provided.
Rare / Serious Side Effects of General Anaesthesia

These side effects and complications are all rare but because the consequences may be very serious (eg. needing to go to intensive care unit or even death) we need to let you know about them.

Drug Reactions
- Some people may have an allergy or reaction to one of the drugs they are given during the procedure. This is very rare but can be potentially fatal.

Chest Infection
- People that get frequent chest infections or who are unable to swallow properly are more likely to get a chest infection after their procedure.
- A chest infection may not occur until 2-3 days after leaving hospital. If you have any concerns about fevers or a new cough after you have left hospital please see your GP. Most chest infections can easily be treated with antibiotics.

Damage to the Eyes
- Small grazes can occur to the outer layer of the eye whilst under anaesthesia
- To prevent this we take precautions including taping the eyes shut and putting a special ointment in the eyes to protect them.

Accidental Awareness
- This is when you do not receive enough anaesthetic medicine during your procedure and have memories of events in the operating room.
- It is very rare and we use specialised equipment to avoid it.

Death
- Death during anaesthesia for dental surgery is very rare. If you are a healthy patient having dental surgery your risk of death is very low. The risk is higher for elderly patients or for patients with lots of medical problems but it is still very rare.
Please note that if we have any concerns during the anaesthetic, we will discuss these in detail with you and your family after the procedure. We may need to make arrangements for you to stay in overnight if there are serious complications during your procedure.

If you have any questions about these side effects or complications please ask your anaesthetist and / or dentist.

For more information about risks associated with general anaesthesia please refer to: https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/428

Additional Notes
Easy Read leaflet is available if you feel this would help. Please ask the dentist/nurse.