Dr.Y.M.Salejee
MBChB (Natal) DA (SA)
MP 0369756 PR No.1527479

PATIENT INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO ANESTHESIA – CHILDREN

This information sheet applies to a child who is aged 16 years or less. A parent is a child's mother, father, or anyone exercising parental responsibility for a child. This includes adoptive parents, adults who may have custody or guardianship or who have a residence or contact order for a child.

Being told that your child needs surgery and an anaesthetic is a very worrying experience for all parents. Generally, a parent decides for their child; however, children vary in maturity and understanding levels so this can be a shared decision. Unnecessary stress can be increased for you and your child by not having enough information about the anaesthetic, so please read this brochure carefully. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your doctor or the hospital.

Your child's Anaesthetist

- Your child's Anaesthetist is a doctor who has studied Anaesthesia after qualifying as a Doctor
- Assess your child's health and then discuss with you and your child the type of anaesthetic suitable for the surgery.
- Discuss the risks of suitable Anaesthetic options.
- Agree to a plan with you and your child for the anaesthetic and pain control.
- Be responsible for giving your child Anaesthetic and caring for your child during surgery and straight after surgery.

Types of Anaesthesia

- A General Anaesthetic is a mixture of drugs to keep your child unconscious and pain free during an operation. Drugs are injected into the vein through cannulae and/or breathed in as gases into the lungs.
- A breathing tube may be put into your child's windpipe to help them breathe while under the anaesthetic. The tube is removed as your child wakes up after surgery.
- A cannulae and drip may be inserted into your child's arm to inject drugs and provide fluid replacement (usually a salt solution drip). A local anaesthetic is used to numb a small part of your child's body. Local anaesthetic cream may be applied to your child's hands approximately an hour prior to surgery. This allows painless insertion of an intravenous needle to start the anaesthetic.
- Putting an intravenous needle into children requires lots of skill, and it is not uncommon, for even an experienced anaesthetist to have several attempts, especially in small babies and infants.
- Regional anaesthesia is where a large part of the body is numbed, for example epidural and spinal anaesthetics. These techniques are used to stop pain during the operation, and/or for stopping pain afterwards. With local and regional anaesthetics your child can stay awake or they can sleep through the surgery (by giving sedation or a general anaesthetic as well) but whether your child is awake or asleep they are free from pain.

What are the risks of Anaesthesia?

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- *Modern anaesthesia is generally very safe*.
- Every anaesthetic has a risk of side effects and complications. Whilst these are usually temporary, some of them may cause long-term problems.
- The risks to your child will depend on:
  - Whether your child has any other illness.
  - Personal factors, such as whether your child is overweight.
  - How simple or complex your child's surgery is.
  - Whether your child's surgery takes a short or a long time.
  - Whether the surgery is done in an emergency.

Common Side Effects and Complications of anaesthesia include

- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache
- Pain and/or bruising at injection sites
- Sore or dry throat and lips
- Blurred/double vision and dizziness
- Problems in passing urine.

Less common Side Effects and Complications of anaesthesia

- Muscle aches and pains
- Weakness
- Mild allergic reaction - itching or rash
- Temporary nerve damage

Uncommon Side Effects and Complications from anaesthesia

- Being awake under general anaesthetic
- Damage to teeth (especially baby teeth)
- Damage to the voice box and cords, which may cause a temporary hoarse voice
- Allergic reactions and/or asthma
- Damage to nerves and pressure areas
- Epileptic seizure
- Chest infection
- Permanent nerve damage due to the needle when giving an injection or due to pressure on a nerve during surgery
- Worsening of an existing medical condition

Rare risks which may cause death

- Severe allergy or shock
- Very high temperature
- Vomit in the lungs (pneumonia)
- Brain damage

Risks are increased if your child:

- Smokes /exposed to smoking
- Overweight.
- A bad cold or flu

P.O.Box 2265, Westville, 3630, Cell 084 556 9917, Email yusufsalejee@hotmail.com

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- Asthma or other chest disease
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- High blood pressure
- Other serious medical conditions

Your responsibility as a parent before your child's surgery

- Your child is less at risk from problems from an anaesthetic if they do the following: Increase their fitness before their surgery (if possible). This improves their blood circulation and lung health.
- If you are breast feeding your child and drink alcohol, you need to stop drinking alcohol for at least 24 hours before your child's surgery.
- If your child smokes, they need to stop smoking at least 6 weeks before surgery to give their lungs and heart a chance to improve. Smoking reduces the oxygen in your blood and increases breathing problems during and after an operation.
- Bring all their prescribed drugs, or drugs you buy over the counter, herbal remedies and supplements that your child takes and show them to the anaesthetist.
- Tell the anaesthetist about any allergies or side effects to tablets that your child may have. If your child drinks any alcohol they need to stop for at least 24 hours before surgery as alcohol may alter the affect of the anaesthetic drugs.
- If your child takes any recreational drugs, this includes recreational smoking such as marijuana they need to stop before surgery as these may affect the anaesthetic.
- If your child has a drug addiction, please tells your anaesthetist.
- If your child is on a contraceptive pill let the surgeon and anaesthetist know.

You must tell the hospital doctor and the anaesthetist of any:

- Health problems
- Infectious diseases
- Past operations
- Serious illnesses
- False teeth, caps, loose teeth or other dental problems
- Any medical problems needing regular treatment or a stay in hospital including diabetes, high blood pressure
- Allergies/intolerances of any type.

Eating and Drinking

- It is very important not to eat, drink, and chew gum or lollies before surgery. No food or drink (including water) to be taken 6 hours before surgery.
- If your child eats or drinks after that time, their surgery may be delayed or cancelled.
- This is to make sure their stomach is empty so that if they vomit under the anaesthetic, there will be nothing to go into their lungs.

Recovery from surgery

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- After the operation, the nursing staff in the Recovery Area will watch your child closely until they are fully conscious.
- Your child will then be returned to the ward or Day Procedure Area where they will rest until they are recovered enough for you to take them home.
- Tell the nurse if your child has any side effects from the anaesthetic, such as headache, nausea, or vomiting. The nurse will be able to give your child some medication to help.

Pain Relief

The anaesthetist will arrange pain relief, any other medications and extra fluids by a drip if needed. Some ways of giving pain relief are:

• Syrups – just like at home.

• Tablets or pills – used for all types of pain. Your child needs to be able to eat and drink and not feel sick for these to work. These takes at least half an hour to work.

• Injections – may be given into a muscle or just under the skin and will take 20 minutes to work. Injections may also be given into a vein; pain relief is within a few minutes.

• Suppositories – these are small pellets that are placed into the bottom (rectum) for pain relief.

• Patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) – (older children only) this is where they can control their own pain relief using a machine called a PCA pump.

• Local/Regional anaesthesia this was explained under the types of anaesthesia heading.

• If you have had a general anaesthetic the surgeon often injects local anaesthetic into the wound while you are asleep; this can give you around 4 – 6 hours of pain relief afterwards before it wears off.

Things for your child to avoid after general anaesthesia

A general anaesthetic will affect your child's judgment for about 24 hours.

For your child's safety, they must:

• NOT drive or ride a bike, scooter, tractors or other farm machinery.

• NOT operate machinery including cooking implements.

• NOT make important decisions such as withdrawal of money from the ATM machine.

• NOT drink alcohol, smoke or take any recreational drugs, this includes recreational smoking such as marijuana. They may react with the anaesthetic drugs.

• Have an adult with them on the first night after surgery. Notes

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your Childs Anaesthetic, please feel free to call Dr Salejee on 0845569917

Further information regarding your Childs Anaesthetic may be obtained at http://www.sasaweb.com/Patients/FAQ

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