



Information Sheet on Anaesthesia

Introduction

Anaesthesia is the use of medication to remove pain and unpleasant sensation during surgical and other procedures. This information sheet introduces the following types of anaesthesia:

1. Local Anaesthesia Local anaesthesia means injection of drugs to numb a small area. You may still feel some degree of pain. Local anaesthesia will be administered by your attending doctor.

2. Monitored Anaesthetic Care (MAC) MAC is administered by an anaesthetist. An anaesthetist is a specially trained doctor who will give you the necessary sedative or anaesthetic drugs to make you sleep, monitor your condition, and provide necessary pain relief and other treatments throughout the procedure. The level of sedation can be tailored from very light to deep sleep according to the operating condition required and your reaction during the procedure. However, the level of sleep is usually lighter than general anaesthesia and you may respond to severe stimulation but probably not remember.

Risks of Anaesthesia

Modern anaesthesia is generally very safe. However, every anaesthetic has a risk of side effects and complications. While most of these are usually temporary, some of them can cause long-term problems. The risk to you will depend on whether you have any other illness, your personal factors such as whether you smoke or are overweight, and the length and complexity of your surgery. Therefore it is important to know about your medical history, your medications, any history of drug allergy, and any previous problem with anaesthesia.

(a) General risks / complications

Minor problems are common, including but not limited to nausea and vomiting, general aches and pains, shivering, headache, dizziness, post-operative pain and pain at injection sites, sore throat, and damage to teeth & lips. Serious complications from anaesthesia are uncommon, including but not limited to breathing difficulties, stroke or brain damage leading to permanent disability, strain on the heart, resulting in heart attack, aspiration and chest infection, anaphylactic drug reactions, and awareness whilst under MAC. * Some of these serious complications can be fatal.

(b) Any risks relevant to the patient

Risks may be increased due to co-existing problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, respiratory disease including asthma, common cold or influenza, smoking, overweight and elderly.

(c) Specific risks associated with local anaesthesia

The anaesthetic drug may not work or works only partially, requiring supplementary anaesthesia.

Remarks

The above is general information only. The list of complications is not exhaustive and other unforeseeable complications may occasionally occur. The risk in certain group of patients may be different. For further information, please contact your anaesthetist.