



## **What is General Anesthesia?**

General anesthesia is a controlled state of unconsciousness induced by the use of inhaled or intravenous medications. Although it may appear that your child is sleeping, this state is different from regular sleep. The goal of general anesthesia is to block awareness and the perception of pain.

### **Risks**

Most healthy people do not have complications with general anesthesia. The most common complication or side effect is nausea and vomiting after the procedure. Other complications are rare and are more likely to occur in people with medical problems. These rare but serious complications include mental confusion, lung infection, coma or death. The risk reported for severe complications from a general anesthetic are 1:100,000 to 1:1,000,000. This is similar to the risk of flying in an airplane and having the airplane crash or walking across the street and being hit by a car.

### **Benefits**

General anesthesia allows dental treatment to be performed efficiently and safely for people who are unable to cooperate with dental treatment while awake or moderately sedated.

### **How does my child go 'to sleep'?**

Your child will either inhale an anesthetic gas via a mask placed over his/her nose and mouth to put him or her 'to sleep' or he/she will receive a medication through an intravenous line. Once 'asleep' your child will have a breathing tube inserted into his/her windpipe.

### **Will I be able to talk to an anaesthesiologist?**

Yes. An anaesthesiologist will review the pre-operative assessment with you just prior to surgery to discuss the anesthesia. If you would like to speak to an anaesthesiologist prior to the day of the surgery, please let us know.

### **What are the effects of the anesthetic and how long will they last?**

Your child will be sleepy and unsteady for the remainder of the day. He/she will require supervision and should be allowed to rest. Your child may develop a low grade fever (below 38°C) for about 8 hours, which is not a concern as long as your child is drinking fluids and appears well. A high grade fever however, is a concern and requires immediate attention. It is also possible that your child may have a sore throat for a few days from the insertion of the tube into his/her windpipe. All children will have a puncture mark either on their arm or leg from insertion of an intravenous line.

### **Can I be with my child when he/she awakens?**

When the surgery is finished your child will be taken to a recovery room for close observation and the surgeon will come to the waiting area to speak with you. For this reason parents are asked to be present in the waiting area for the duration of their child's surgery. Once the nurses and anesthesia staff are satisfied that your child's vital signs are stable, you will be allowed to stay with your child until he/she is discharged. The surgeon and the nurses will provide you with both written and verbal instructions about how to look after your child once you are home.

