آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال
The Aga Khan University Hospital

WHAT IS ANAESTHESIA?

Information for Patients/Guardians

CAP ACCREDITED
COLLEGE of AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS

Anaesthesia is a specialised medical service designed to keep you safe, comfortable, and pain-free during surgery or other medical procedures. Throughout your journey, you are never alone. Your anaesthesiologist is a specialist doctor who looks after you before, during, and after your surgery. They monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure, and work closely with the surgical team to ensure your safety and comfort throughout.

The Role of an Anaesthesiologist

An anaesthesiologist is a highly trained medical doctor who specialises in safely administering anaesthesia, managing pain, monitoring and supporting vital organ functions, and providing critical care. They carefully assess your health before surgery, manage any complex medical conditions during procedures, and ensure your safe recovery afterward. Their expertise makes them an essential part of the surgical care team, helping to ensure your safety and comfort at every stage of treatment.

Types of Anaesthesia

1. **General Anaesthesia:** You are completely asleep and unaware during the procedure.

2. **Spinal Anaesthesia:** A specific part of your body is numbed, such as with a spinal or epidural injection. You are usually awake but may be given a light sedative.

3. **Regional Anaesthesia Blocks:** A smaller area of your body is numbed while you remain fully awake and alert.

4. **Monitored Anaesthesia Care:** You are relaxed and sleepy, though you may remain partially awake while your vital signs are closely monitored.

Your Journey Under Anaesthesia

Your anaesthesiologist will create a complete care plan for before, during, and after your surgery to ensure the best possible comfort and safety.

Before Surgery (Preoperative Care):

The anaesthesiologist will check your medical history, do a physical exam, and review any lab or imaging tests needed. They might ask you to see other specialists, like heart or lung doctors, if needed. They will also discuss your anaesthesia and pain management plan, tell you which medicines to stop or continue, and give you specific fasting instructions:

- **Clear water:** Stop 2 hours before surgery time.
- **Breast milk:** Stop 4 hours before surgery time.
- **Light meals:** Stop 6 hours before surgery time.
- **Heavy meals:** Stop 8 hours before surgery time.

During Surgery (Intraoperative Care): The anaesthesiologist will keep you safe, comfortable, and in a calm, anxiety-free environment. They will constantly check your heart, lungs, blood pressure, and oxygen, and provide the anaesthesia technique and pain care, with your consent. They will also manage your body's essential needs, such as blood, fluids, and nutrition.

After Surgery (Postoperative Care): The anaesthesiologist will watch over your recovery, so you wake up smoothly and comfortably. They will make sure you are pain-free, prevent nausea or vomiting, keep you warm, and manage your continued care.

What Happens While You Are Under Anaesthesia?

Your anaesthesiologist acts as your guardian, staying with you to ensure your safety and comfort. Modern anaesthesia care includes:

- Giving tailored medications to keep you asleep, pain-free, and stable.
- Providing fluids and nutrition through IV drips as needed.
- Maintaining body temperature to keep you warm and safe.
- Using advanced monitoring technology to track your heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen levels, and other vital signs in real time.
- Managing any medical issues or complications immediately, should they arise.

Is Anaesthesia Safe?

Every surgery and anaesthesia carries some risk, and patients with serious health issues may face higher risks. However, modern anaesthesia is extremely safe when given by a qualified anaesthesiologist using modern monitoring equipment. This careful management makes the process very safe, allowing most patients to have surgery comfortably and with minimal risks.

Beyond Surgery Care

Anaesthesiologists are multitaskers who do much more than care for patients during surgery. Some get extra training to specialise in intensive care, pain management, or childbirth. Even general anaesthesiologists have important roles outside the operating room, such as:

- Caring for critically ill patients in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).
- Helping patients manage ongoing or chronic pain in outpatient clinics.
- Providing pain relief for mothers to have a comfortable childbirth.
- Leading emergency care and resuscitation to keep patients safe in critical or urgent situations.

The Aga Khan University Hospital

(021) 111-911-911

https://hospitals.aku.edu/Pakistan

akuhpakistan | AKUHPakistan | @AKUHPakistan

A Unit of The Aga Khan University Hospital and Medical College Foundation; Licensed under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance 1984;
Registered Office: Stadium Road, P.O. Box 3500, Karachi 74800, Pakistan.