



Associate Professor Peter Hebbard MB. BS. PG Dip Echo. FANZCA

How to prepare for your anaesthesia

There are many ways you can improve your health prior to anaesthesia and prepare yourself for surgery.

For elective surgery you can reduce your risks of both anaesthetic and surgical complications by giving up smoking as early as possible prior to your procedure. Improving your physical fitness and strength will also assist.

Any chronic medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease should be optimally controlled. You should see your own doctor as early as possible if you are concerned about the effect of other aspects of your health.

Your anaesthetist will enquire about your general health and medications (including inhaled medications) as well as allergies and illnesses. If you are unsure of your medications a list is often useful. You will be asked about any difficulties with previous anaesthesia and the occurrence of problems such as nausea, vomiting or pain afterwards.

Any abnormalities of your mouth and jaw which may create difficulties maintaining breathing under anaesthesia will be assessed and the presence of false teeth and dental work identified. Often instruments need to be placed in the mouth under anaesthesia and this can damage teeth.

Most medication should be taken as normal prior to anaesthesia particularly medication for high blood pressure, heart medications and medication for heartburn. If you take blood thinning medication or diabetic medication you should receive specific instructions as these may need to be ceased or modified.

For most major surgery and in selected other cases your surgeon or local doctor may request that you see your anaesthetist prior to surgery. This is to arrange appropriate investigations and allow you to discuss your anaesthesia well prior to surgery.

On the day of surgery, you should keep yourself warm as this causes the veins of the arm to dilate and makes intravenous injection easier for you. Please bring all your medications to hospital.

You should receive specific instructions from the hospital about discharge. You are not permitted to drive for 24 hours after anaesthesia and if going home on the day of surgery will need somebody at home with you for the night after anaesthesia.