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Anaesthetic information sheet for gastroscopy and colonoscopy

What is anaesthesia?

Anaesthesia is a medical procedure to make a patient comfortable during surgery. A doctor specially trained in anaesthesia normally performs this procedure.

What types of anaesthesia are used for these procedures?

For procedures such as gastroscopy and colonoscopy (often called collectively endoscopy), full unconsciousness is not required as the procedure is uncomfortable rather than painful like surgery. These techniques may be called deep sedation or monitored anaesthesia care. It is very unusual for the patient to have any recollection during these procedures.

How is this done?

Anaesthesia for endoscopy is usually performed by the intravenous route. I give sufficient drug to keep the person undergoing the procedure comfortable while ensuring that adequate breathing and heart function is maintained. It is normal to give some extra oxygen via a face mask or through nasal prongs to maintain oxygen levels in the blood. When anaesthesia is given this way, the effects wear off quickly.

Common Anaesthetic Problems

Post operative Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting can be side effects of anaesthesia, but can also simply be related to the procedure. It is unusual with anaesthesia for endoscopy.

Sore throat

During anaesthesia for endoscopy a device may need to be passed through the mouth to control the breathing. This procedure may lead to some soreness of the throat post-operatively.

Rare Problems

Heart and breathing disorders

I need to assess your health prior to your anaesthetic to minimise the risk of heart and breathing disorders. It is important to fast as instructed before endoscopy to empty your stomach of food also take any antacid or reflux medications as normal. This may otherwise cause problems by getting into your lungs during the anaesthetic. You should take your medications as normal before anaesthesia, if you are diabetic you should receive special instructions. Stopping smoking for even 6 weeks before anaesthesia will reduce complications

Unintended awareness

I will always aim to ensure that you are comfortable. Unintended memories of your procedure are rare. If your health is poor I may need to limit the amount of anaesthetic drug you receive which increases the risk of remembering.

Dental damage

Instruments and devices in your mouth may lead to damage to the teeth, particularly when you are waking up.

If you have any questions regarding your anaesthetic please discuss these with me during your pre-anaesthetic consultation

Anaesthetic Fees

Health funds vary in the amount of payment they make for anaesthesia. For some procedures and health funds I charge a gap on your account. I aim to post out written quotes as early as possible. Anaesthetic rebates under the government MBS have reduced in real terms over the years and private health fund rebate rates vary widely.