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Department of Anaesthesia

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St Helens and Knowsley
Teaching Hospitals
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Regional Anaesthesia for Day Case Surgery: Information for You

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

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Many operations can be carried out without a general anaesthetic. This is done by injecting a medicine (local anaesthetic) around nerves making your operation site numb.

This may have many benefits to you. In many cases, this injection is all that is needed and you will stay awake during the operation. Sometimes, light sedation is also given to you and this will be discussed in detail by your anaesthetist.

Why is it good?

- As you will be awake during surgery, the complications of general anaesthesia are avoided. This is especially important if you have other health problems that could make general anaesthesia more of a risk to you.
- You should have a shorter recovery period and have better pain relief for a longer time.
- You should be able to go home earlier.
- You should be able to eat and drink straight away and not feel sick or drowsy.

What will happen on the day of your operation?

- Upon arrival to theatres, you will be greeted by an operating department practitioner who will be helping your anaesthetist(s). Routine monitors will be attached to you.
- The nerves that supply your operated area (shoulder/arm/hand) will be blocked by a local anaesthetic injection using a needle that is guided by either an ultrasound machine (that shows the nerves) or a nerve stimulator (which twitches the nerves).
- The operated area will start to feel heavy and numb. Some people describe it as 'pins and needles'. Your anaesthetist will test the area to ensure it is ready to proceed with surgery. You might still feel some touch and movement but you should not feel any sharp pain.
- A tight band may be applied to your arm to reduce bleeding.

- There will be a screen that will prevent you from seeing the operation in progress.
- After your operation you might stay in recovery for a short while before returning to your ward. You will be able to eat and drink straight away.
- You will be able to go home as soon as your take-home medication is ready.

Please remember:

- Your shoulder / arm and hand may remain numb for up to 24 hours. During this time your arm should be protected in a sling until sensation returns back to normal. Please be careful not to come in contact with very hot or very cold liquids or attempt extreme movements as you will have little control and sensation.
- If numbness continues beyond 48 hours, please contact the numbers listed below.
- You should start taking your painkillers as prescribed when the tingling sensation returns. Please do not wait until you are in pain.

Potential Risks

The techniques used are generally very safe. Complications may still occur and these will be discussed with you in greater detail by your anaesthetist; they include:

Very common or common:

- Pain and bruising at injection site
- Temporary nerve damage. Usually resolves in 4-6 weeks

Rare or very rare:

- Permanent nerve damage 1:23,500- 1:50,000
- Drug reactions