

Information and Discharge Instructions

Spinal Anaesthesia

Name: _____

What is Spinal Anaesthesia?

- A small needle is placed into the area of the back that contains spinal fluid
- Freezing medicine is injected into the spinal fluid
- The needle is removed
- The medicine makes you numb from the waist down

Is a spinal anaesthesia painful?

- First you may be given some medicine to relax you
- Freezing medicine is placed into the skin
- The freezing feels like a bee sting and is often the most uncomfortable part
- It feels like the freezing at the dentist

Why should I have a spinal anaesthetic?

- Depending on your surgery and your medical condition spinal anaesthesia can be less stressful on your body
- Less risk of nausea and vomiting after your surgery
- It is very well tolerated by patients

What are the risks?

The risks are very small, most occurring in less than 1 in 100 patients that receive a spinal anaesthetic.

Bad headache when you stand or sit Decrease in Blood Pressure Infection at the needle site Bleeding from the needle site Very small risk of nerve damage (less than 1 in 10,000)
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I have back problems. Can I still have a spinal anaesthetic?

- Discuss any back problems with your Anaesthesiologist
- You may still be able to have a spinal anaesthetic
- It may take a longer time to place the needle

Does this mean I will be awake during my surgery?

- You may receive more medicine to relax you and make you sleepy during your surgery

Seek medical attention immediately if you have:

- Pain from a full bladder or have not passed urine for 8 hours
- Severe pain and pain medicine does not help
- Headache and pain medicine does not help
- A fever over 38° C or 100.4° F
- Nausea and vomiting that does not stop
- Any signs of infection at the puncture site such as:

Redness Swelling Pus like discharge Tenderness

When you go home:

- Do not drive for 24 hour
- You may feel dizzy or sick to your stomach if you get up too quickly, so change positions slowly

If you get a headache:

Take Tylenol as directed on the medicine bottle You may also take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) as directed Talk to your local pharmacist about your pain Drink plenty of fluids Drinking caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, cola) may help

See your doctor or go to emergency if your headache does not go away in 4-7 days