

## Information on anaesthesia

Dear patient

You have been planned to undergo an operation or an exam requiring anaesthesia care in the near future. This document will give you important information about the different methods of anaesthesia, which you can read before the anaesthesia consultation that will take place either on the day of hospital admission or in the preoperative clinic some days in advance.

**The anaesthesia doctor will decide on the type of anaesthesia together with you, hereby considering your state of health, the type of surgery and your medical history, and he/she will answer your questions. We kindly ask you to fill out the health questionnaire enclosed.**

The anaesthesia doctor is involved in the following tasks:

Anaesthesia care	→ Pain relief and/or anaesthesia during surgery or other interventions
Recovery room	→ Patient care after surgery or after interventions
Intensive Care	→ Patient care in our Intensive Care or High Dependency Unit
Pain Therapy	→ Pain relief on the ward after surgery and in patients with chronic pain.

### Types of anaesthesia:

→ **General anaesthesia („full anaesthesia“):** Your consciousness and pain sensation is totally suppressed. Often patients are given artificial respiration: As soon as you are deeply unconscious a small tube is inserted into your airway (intubation).

→ **Regional anaesthesia („partial anaesthesia“):** Selected regions of your body are anaesthetized by injection of local anaesthetic drugs. Herby you have the choice to be fully awake (and listen to music by head phones) or to sleep by means of some medication.

The most important methods of regional anaesthesia are described below:

### Regional blocks near the spinal cord:

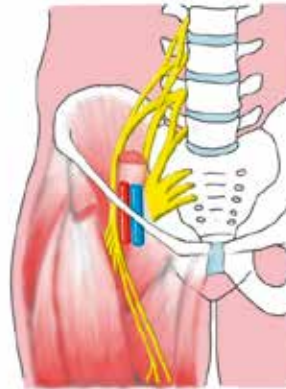
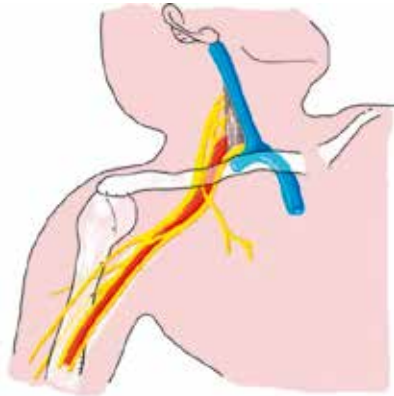
A local anaesthetic is injected either in the spinal liquid surrounding the spinal nerves (**spinal anaesthesia**) or in the space between the spinal canal and the meninges (**epidural anaesthesia**). This will block sensation in the related parts of the body and the related limbs will be paralyzed until the effect of the local anaesthetic wears off.



Regional blocks of the upper and lower limbs: A local anaesthetic is injected around a single or around several nerves (nerve block). This allows to block sensation and movement of an arm or a leg. For short operations also intravenous blocks are applicable: The local anaesthetic is injected into a vein after a blood pressure cuff has been inflated on the upper arm or the thigh in order to keep the local anaesthetic in the limb to be anaesthetized.

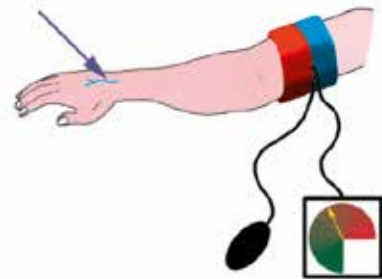
Nerve blocks of the upper or lower limbs:

The local anaesthetic is injected along the nerves at the appropriate place mostly with the use of ultrasound and an nerve stimulator.



Intravenous block:

The local anaesthetic is injected into a vein of the hand or the foot (arrow).



Regional blocks may be incomplete so that pain sensation is not fully suppressed. In these cases supplementary drugs are given for pain relief and sedation. Sometimes also general anaesthesia may be necessary. In order to optimize pain therapy after major operations regional blocks and general anaesthesia are combined.

**During anaesthesia** our anaesthesia team will continuously take care of you. After surgery you will be monitored in the recovery room, the high dependency or intensive care unit or in your room on the ward.

**Strong pain after surgery** may disturb your general condition and can impair the healing process. A good pain therapy is therefore important. The anaesthesia doctor will discuss with you the most appropriate pain therapy: Pills, injections, patches, infusion pumps or nerve catheters. Please call our nursing staff in case of insufficient pain therapy.

**Anaesthesia has reached a very high level of safety.** Nevertheless there remain specific risks of each anaesthesia technique. **The Anaesthesia Consent Sheet (enclosed) gives you an overview.** Please don't worry too much about this list. The anaesthesia doctor will give you further explanations in order that you can relate the risk to the benefit of the techniques.

In case of anaesthesia related problems that may occur after you left the hospital (e.g. uncontrollable pain, respiratory problems or reduced consciousness) please contact our anaesthesia staff on call.

**031 308 84 94 oder 031 308 84 40**

Thank you for your confidence. With the best wishes for your hospital stay and your recovery.

**Your anaesthesia team.**