

Davy the Detective

Finding out about anaesthetics

When Davy wants to know about something, he becomes a detective (with a little help from his friends).



Information about anaesthesia
for young people

ai anaesthesia
information

This is part of a series of information leaflets about anaesthesia.
You can find the rest at www.rcoa.ac.uk/childrensinfo.

One day not long ago



Davy's notes



General anaesthetic

- Medicine that makes you completely unconscious. It's as if the thinking part of your brain has been switched off for a while. You can't see, hear or feel anything, a bit like a really deep sleep.
- Used for operations and some kinds of medical tests.

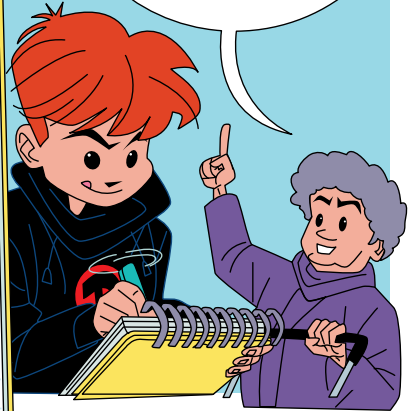
Local anaesthetic

- Medicine that makes part of your body numb so it doesn't feel pain.
- Can be cream, spray or injection.

Anaesthetist

- A specially trained doctor.
- Gives you the anaesthetic medicine and keeps you unconscious for your test or operation.
- Stays with you all the time while you're having your test or operation to make sure you are safe and unconscious.
- Before your anaesthetic, you should be able to meet your anaesthetist and talk about what's going to happen.

... and that's as much as I know. If you want to find out more, why don't you get your friends to help you investigate? Remember what Grandpa used to say - knowledge is power.



Suzie! Luka! Meet me at Gran's house - we've got some detective work to do!



Later that day

... and that's why I need your help. Any ideas team?

My dad works at the hospital, he might tell us something - I'll text him.

And my cousin Nadia was born with a funny shaped foot. She's had lots of operations for it. In fact, she's in hospital now.

Nadia couldn't have any food before she had her anaesthetic, but it's ok for her to eat now. And she's allowed to have visitors as well. Let's go to the hospital.

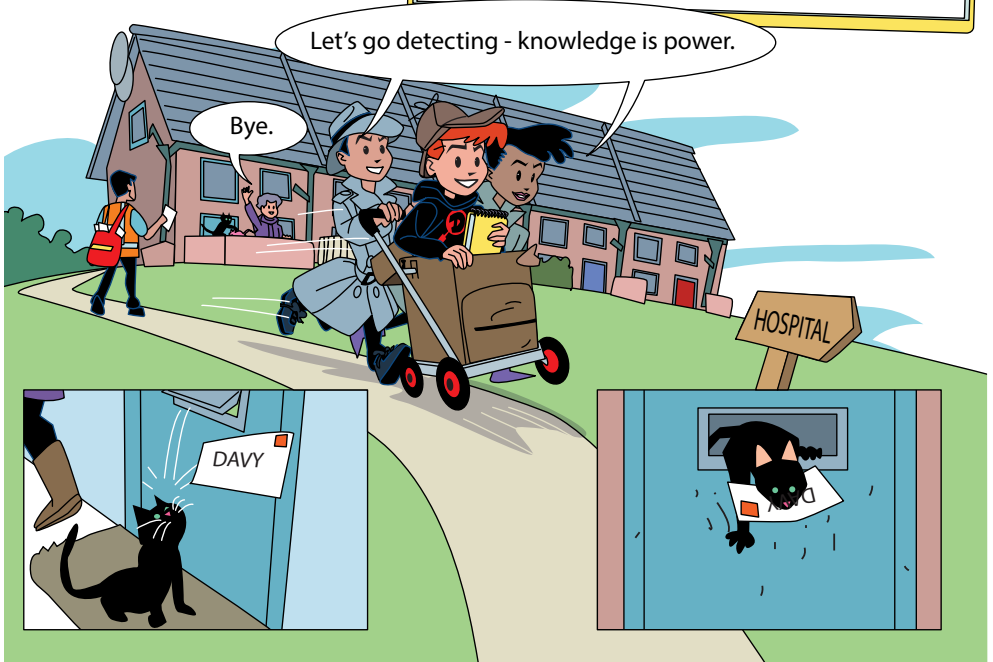
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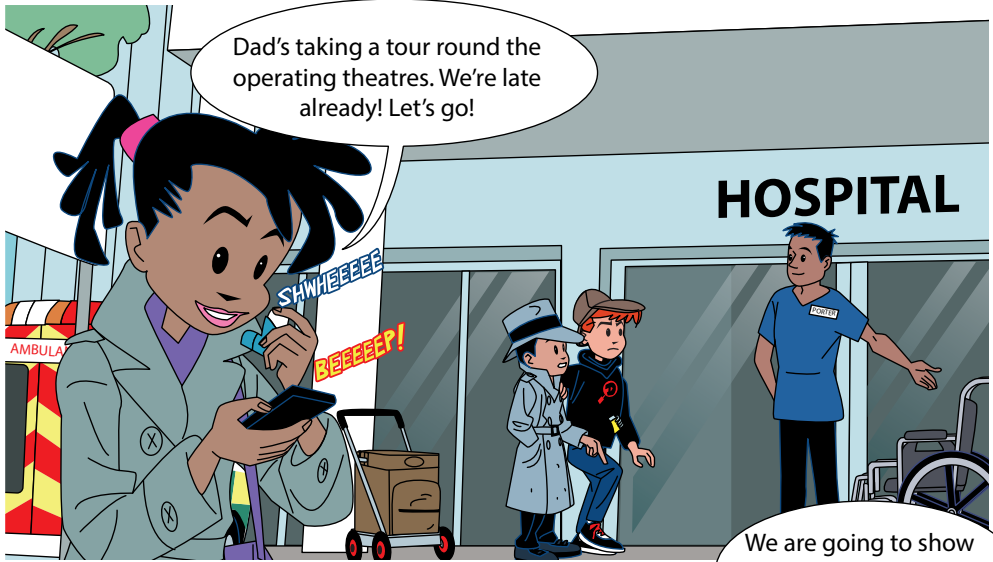


Davy's notes

fasting means not eating or drinking.

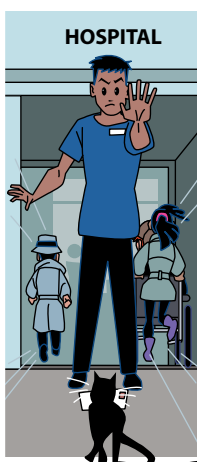
- You cannot have any food, milk, chewing gum, sweets or fizzy drinks for six hours before the anaesthetic.
- You cannot have any water or fruit squash for two hours before the anaesthetic.
- Fasting is very important. If you have anything in your stomach during an anaesthetic, it might come back up while you are unconscious and get into your lungs.



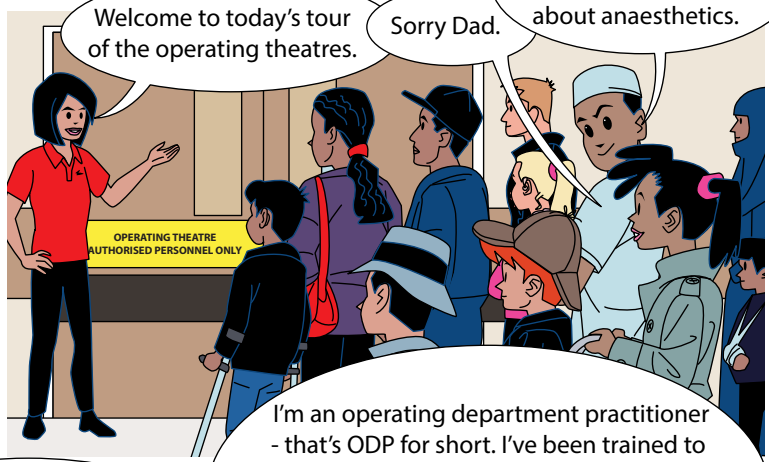


Dad's taking a tour round the operating theatres. We're late already! Let's go!

HOSPITAL



HOSPITAL



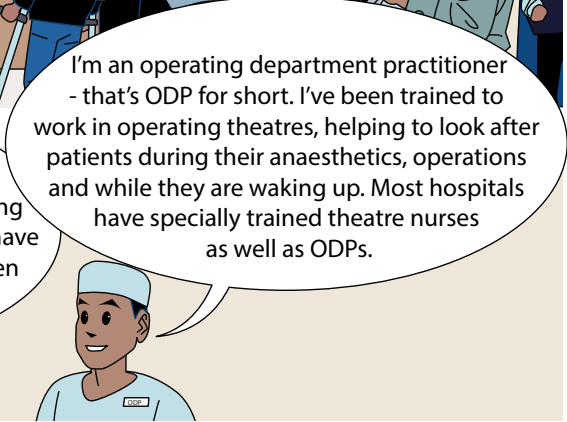
Welcome to today's tour of the operating theatres.

Sorry Dad.

We are going to show you around and explain about anaesthetics.



I'm a play specialist. I've been trained to help young people understand what is happening to them in hospital. Not all hospitals have play specialists. If there isn't one when you go into hospital, a nurse will help you.



I'm an operating department practitioner - that's ODP for short. I've been trained to work in operating theatres, helping to look after patients during their anaesthetics, operations and while they are waking up. Most hospitals have specially trained theatre nurses as well as ODPs.

ANAESTHETIC ROOM

Monitoring equipment

Cupboards

Intravenous drip

Anaesthetic machine

This is where patients have their anaesthetic.

Come inside and we'll show you around.

Fridge for medicines

Patient trolley



Davy's notes

Cannula

- A small bendy plastic tube that goes into a vein - usually on the back of your hand.
- A needle is used to put it in, but then taken out very quickly, just leaving the bendy tube behind.
- A cannula is used for giving medicines and fluids in veins.

Local anaesthetic cream or spray

- Numbs your skin if you need a blood test or need to have a cannula put in, so that you don't feel the needle too much.
- The cream is sometimes called 'magic cream'. It is usually put onto the back of your hand and covered by a plaster to stop it rubbing off. It takes at least half an hour to work, but then lasts for two hours or more.

Is there anyone here having an operation who would like to have a close look at some of the equipment?

This is an anaesthetic mask. Would you like to try it on?

Does it hurt?

Ssst, mmmm

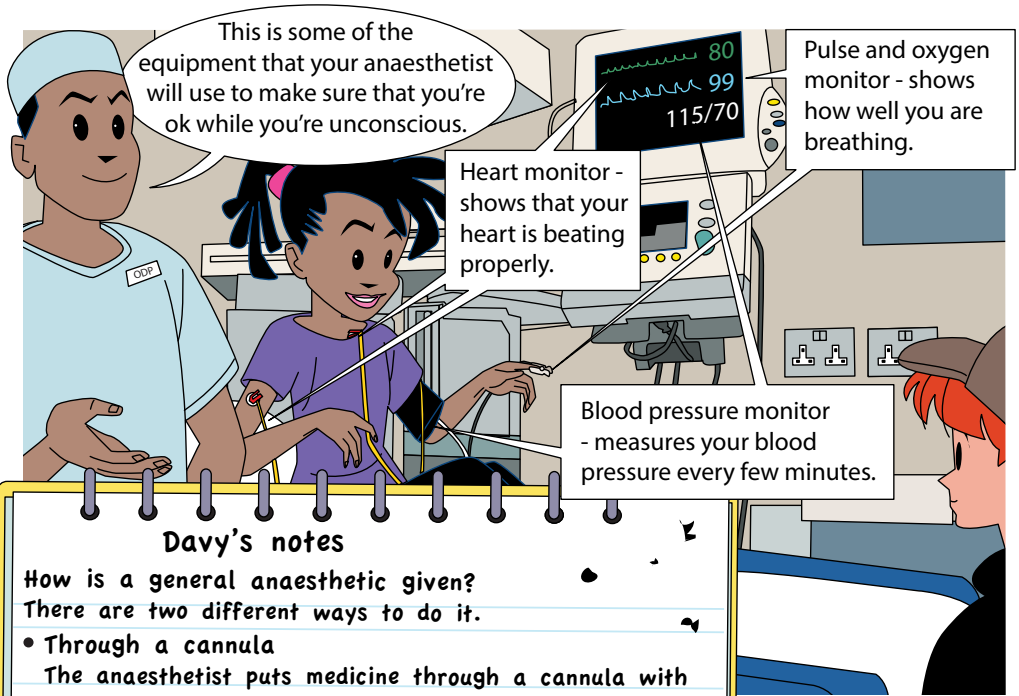
Translation - It's soft! Smells of plastic.

And here's a cannula. When we're getting you ready for your operation, I'll need to squeeze your arm gently to help the anaesthetist put it in. It's not usually too uncomfortable if you have the local anaesthetic on your hand first.

Any questions?

Can I have a go at something?

Of course you can - climb up on this trolley.



Davy's notes

How is a general anaesthetic given?

There are two different ways to do it.

- **Through a cannula**

The anaesthetist puts medicine through a cannula with a syringe. It can be uncomfortable as it goes in. First you taste something in your mouth, then you feel dizzy. The next thing you know, you're waking up and everything is done. It's very fast.

- **Using a mask**

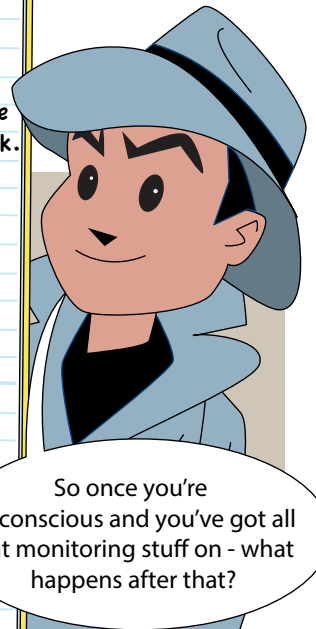
You breathe anaesthetic medicine in. It smells a bit like felt-tip pens. The medicine takes about a minute to work. You still need a cannula later, but they put it in after you're unconscious, so you don't feel it at all.

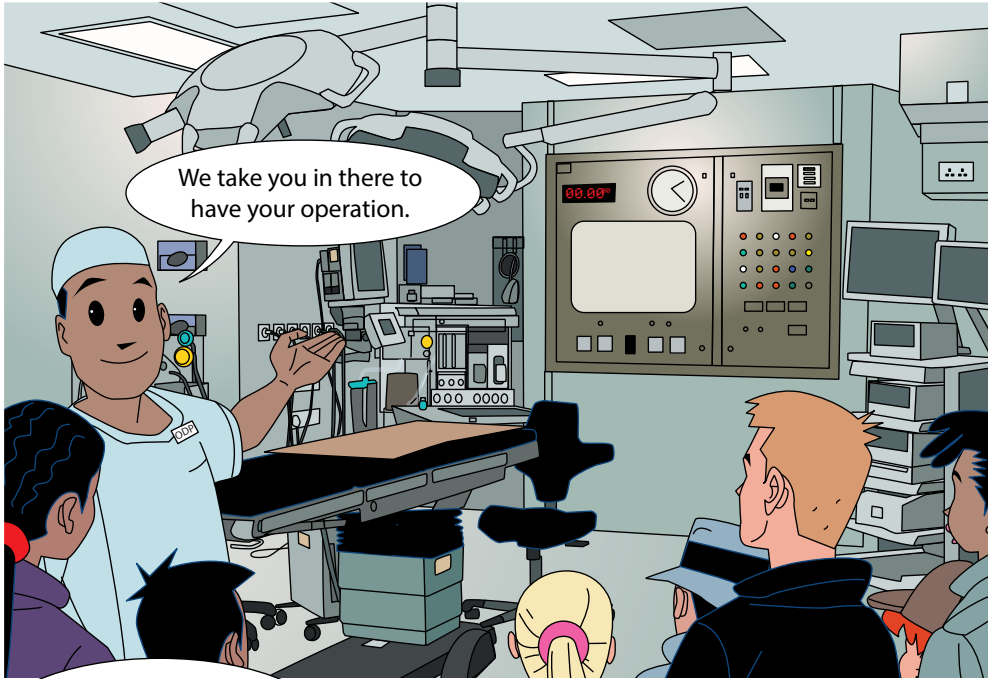
Getting the right dose of anaesthetic

- You get weighed when you arrive at the hospital.
- They use your weight to work out the right dose of medicine for you.

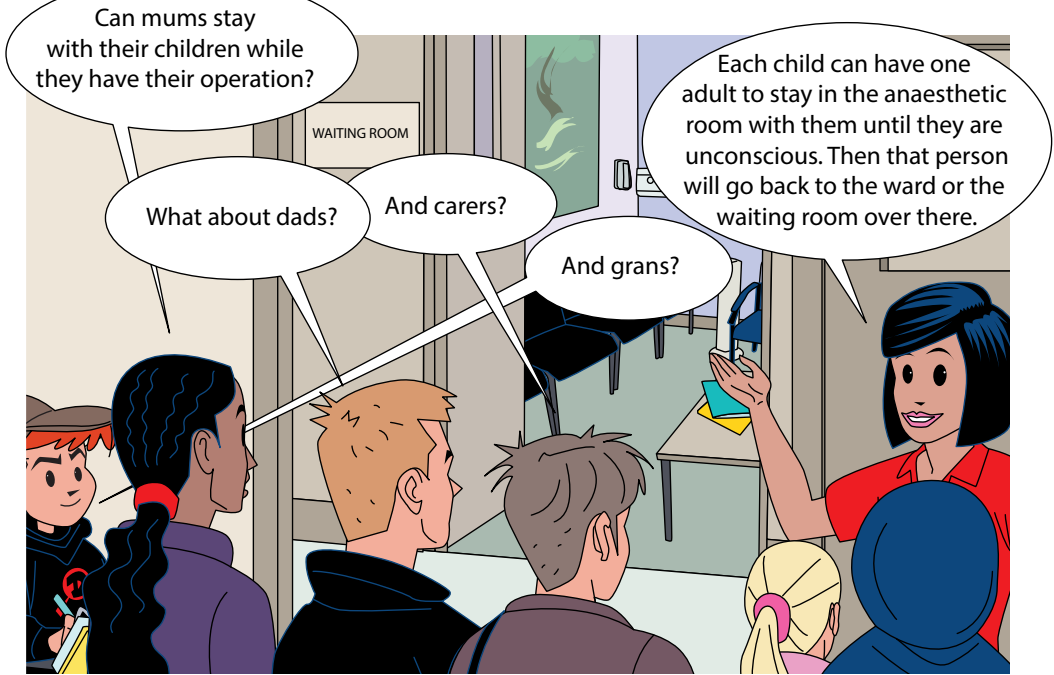
Other medicines you might get while you're under anaesthetic

- Medicines to control the pain after your operation.
- Medicines to stop you feeling sick.
- You may also be given fluid into a vein (through an intravenous drip) if you've not had a drink for a while.





We take you in there to have your operation.



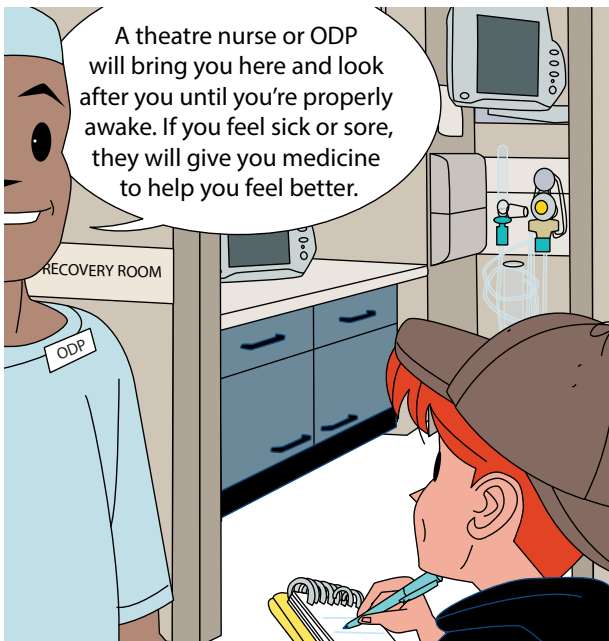
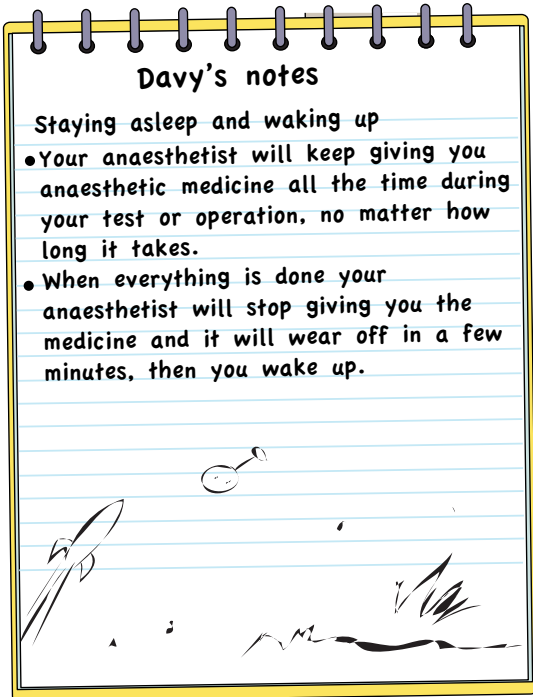
Can mums stay with their children while they have their operation?

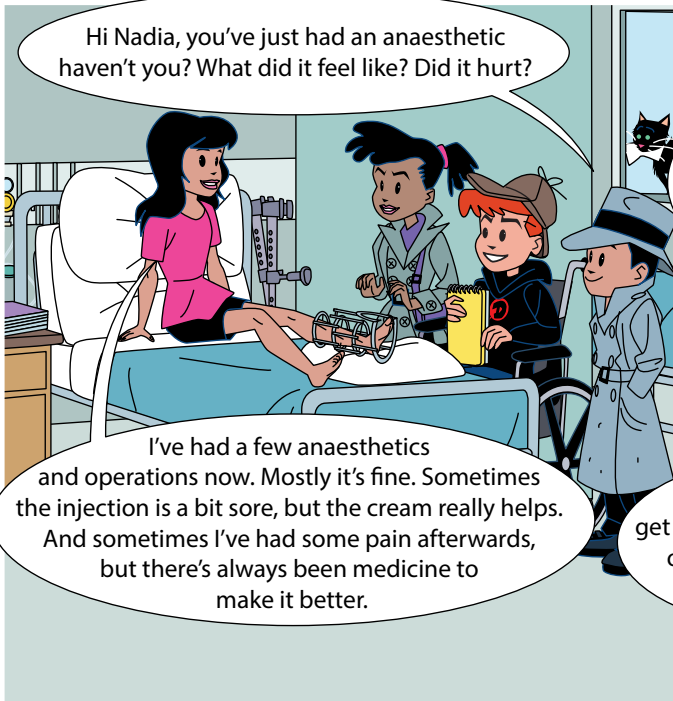
What about dads?

And carers?

And grans?

Each child can have one adult to stay in the anaesthetic room with them until they are unconscious. Then that person will go back to the ward or the waiting room over there.





Hi Nadia, you've just had an anaesthetic haven't you? What did it feel like? Did it hurt?

What did you dream about during your operation?

I didn't dream at all. I don't think many people do. So, why are you asking me all these questions anyway? Are you having an operation?

Yes, I am.

Are you nervous about it?

Maybe, just a little bit.

I've had a few anaesthetics and operations now. Mostly it's fine. Sometimes the injection is a bit sore, but the cream really helps. And sometimes I've had some pain afterwards, but there's always been medicine to make it better.

If you start to get really worried, there's plenty of stuff you can do to take your mind off things.



For example, I like looking at a book.



But some people choose to imagine that they are somewhere really nice.





Other people like to talk to someone about what they are worried about.

Davy's notes

Pre-med

- Medicine before your anaesthetic.
- Could be medicine to ease pain, or something to stop you feeling so nervous.
- Might make you feel dizzy or tired. You may need to lie down after taking this medicine.

Ideas to help cope with nervous feelings

- Looking at a book or playing a game.
- Listening to music.
- Talking to someone.
- Imagining being somewhere nice.
- My ideas

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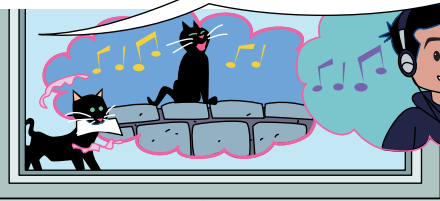
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And others find that music helps them to relax.

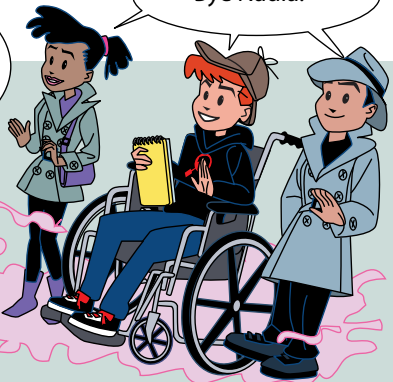


Bye Nadia.



So, you see Davy, there are lots of really good ways to relax. Guys! Where are you going? Don't you have more questions for me?

Purrrrrrr.



Thanks for your help detectives!
Now let's get back to Gran's house!



Davy's notes

How you might feel after the operation

- This depends on what kind of operation or anaesthetic you've had.
- You might feel sleepy, dizzy or have a sore throat (this won't last long). If you don't feel good, tell someone so that they can help you feel better.
- You will get medicine to ease any pain as part of the anaesthetic, but if you need more, ask the nurses and doctors.

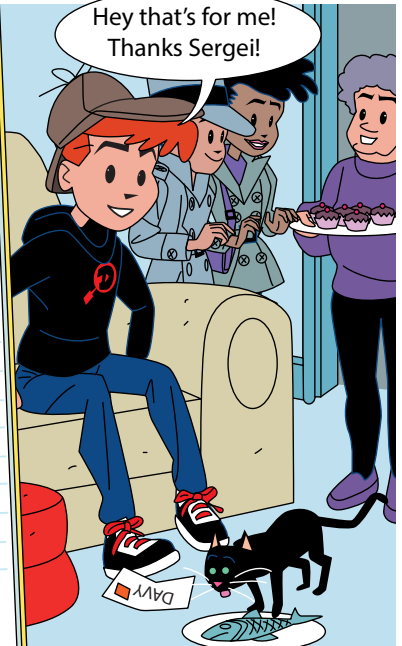
Eating and drinking afterwards

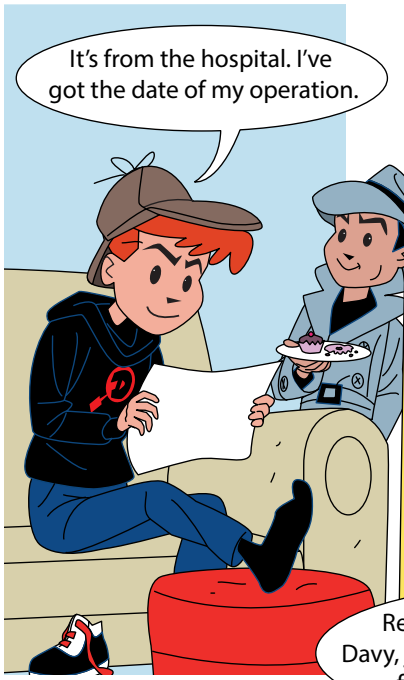
- When you can have something to eat and drink depends on what kind of operation and anaesthetic you've had, and when you start to feel hungry.

Going home

- Again, this depends on what kind of anaesthetic or operation you've had. You'll need to stay at least till you can eat and drink. Your parent or the person looking after you will be able to stay with you.

Hey that's for me!
Thanks Serge!





Davy's notes

List of things to take to hospital

- Clean clothes
- Toothbrush
- favourite toy
- Something to read or play with
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-
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What to wear for an anaesthetic and operation

- Needs to be loose and comfortable, and easy to wash afterwards.
- The hospital might give you something to wear, maybe a gown or pyjamas.

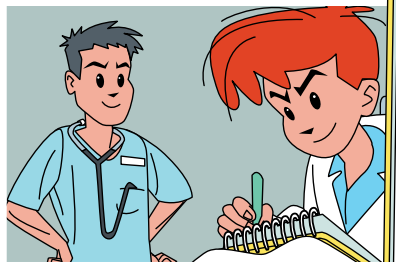
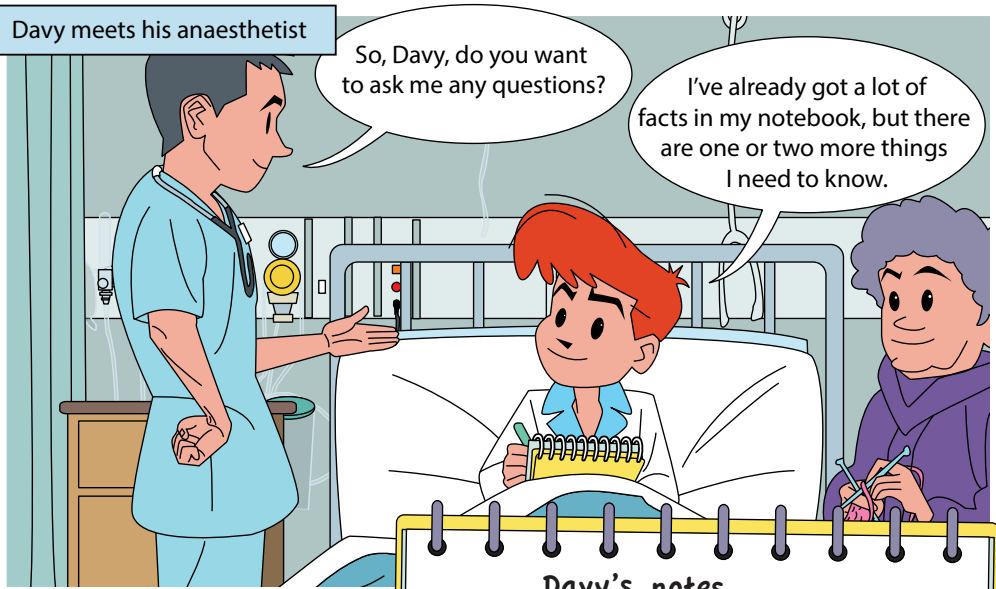
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Remember, no breakfast today Davy, just one glass of water and don't forget to pack your pyjamas.

At last - the day of the operation arrives



Davy meets his anaesthetist



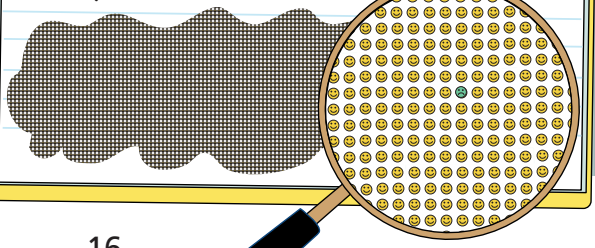
Davy's notes

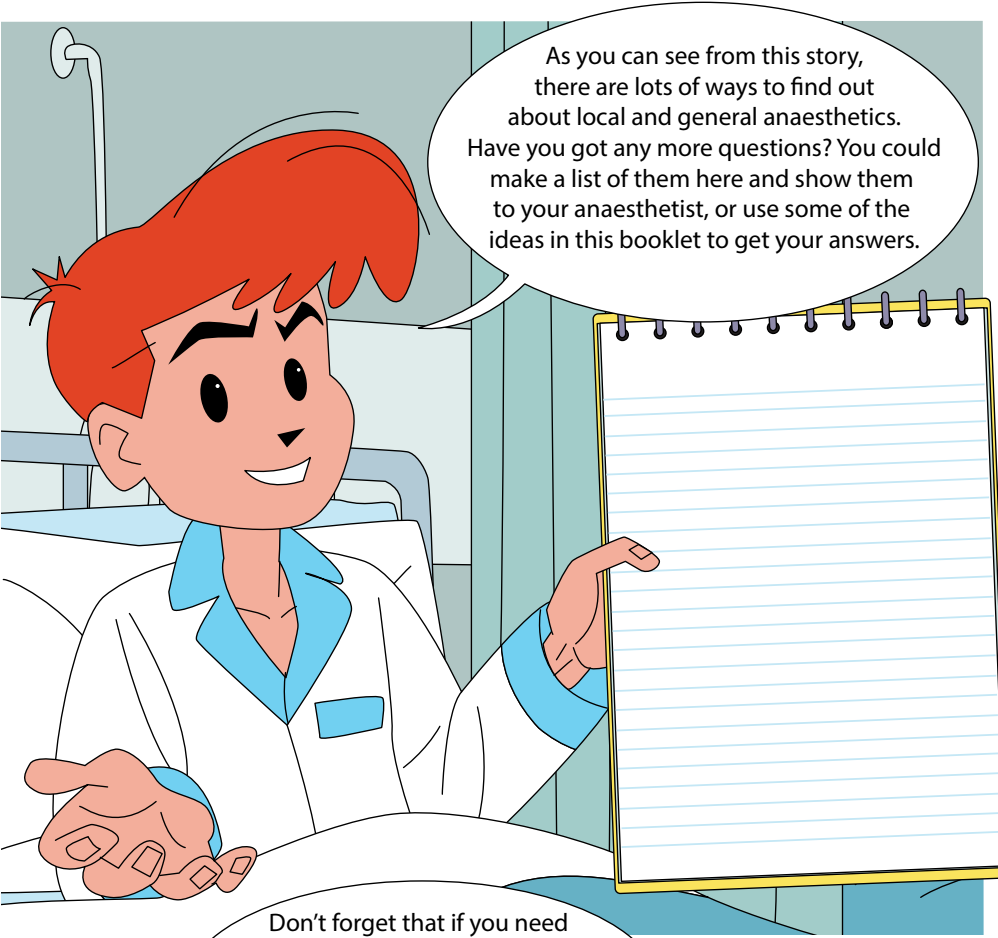
How do general anaesthetics work?

- The anaesthetic medicine travels through your body to the nerves in your brain.
- Your nerves stop sending or receiving signals and this makes you unconscious for a while.
- When the anaesthetic medicine is stopped, it wears off quickly. Then your nerves start to work normally again and you wake up.

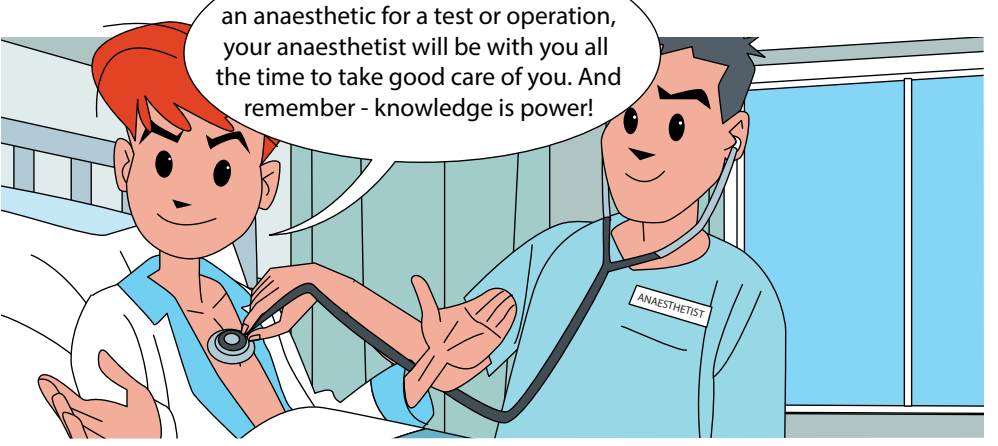
Are anaesthetics safe?

- Modern anaesthetics are very safe.
- You can get a sore throat or feel sick. (This can happen to one person in every 10.)
- The chance of anything really serious going wrong is very, very small. The anaesthetist is there all the time to make sure you are safely unconscious.





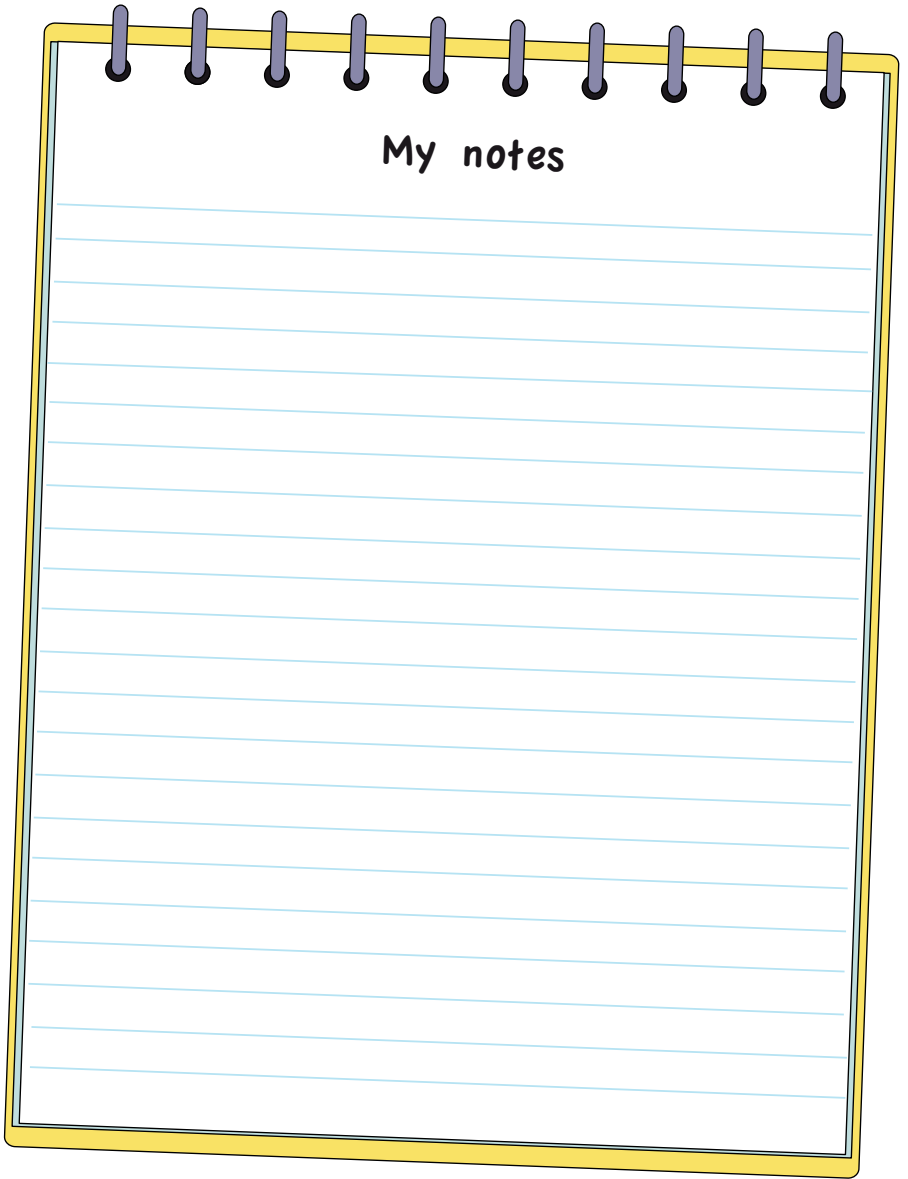
As you can see from this story, there are lots of ways to find out about local and general anaesthetics. Have you got any more questions? You could make a list of them here and show them to your anaesthetist, or use some of the ideas in this booklet to get your answers.



Don't forget that if you need an anaesthetic for a test or operation, your anaesthetist will be with you all the time to take good care of you. And remember - knowledge is power!



My notes



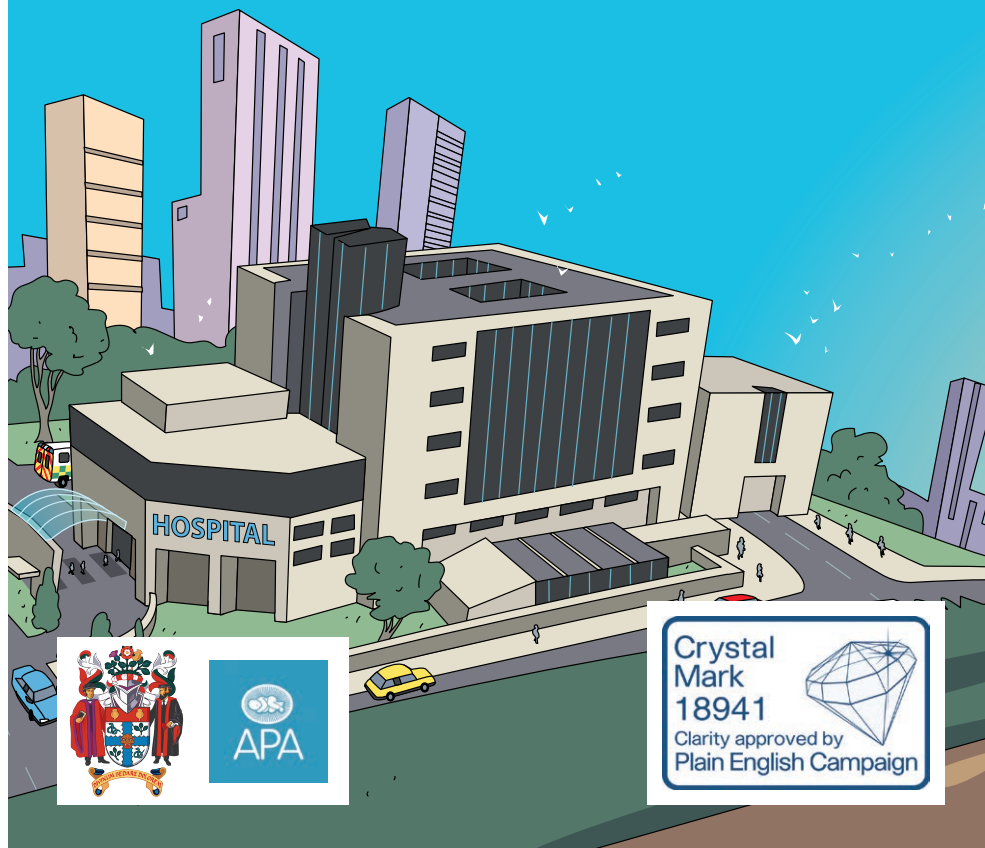
My notes

Tell us what you think

We're always looking for ways to make these booklets better. If you have any suggestions, please send them to:

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