

Information for Patients

Breastfeeding Around My Operation



This leaflet will answer questions you might have if you are breastfeeding and need an operation. Please tell staff that you are breastfeeding. This will help us when planning your operation.

What is a general anaesthetic, regional anaesthetic and sedation?

A general anaesthetic is getting you into a deep sleep for an operation. Regional anaesthesia is doing injections around your nerves. This will make the area numb for an operation.

Sedation is being in a light sleep, where you may wake up, during the operation.

We will decide what type of anaesthetic is best for the operation you are going to have. We will talk to you about this on the day.

Can I breastfeed around my operation?

Yes. Breastfeeding is of great value to both you and your infant. We suggest that you breastfeed as normally as possible. If you decide to express breast milk, we do not suggest the 'pump and dump' method. We can store the breastmilk in a fridge for you. You can then give the expressed breast milk to your infant safely.

If you would like, our Infant Feeding Team will contact you before your operation. They will offer you support to help you breastfeed while you are in hospital.

What should I think about?

It is important to think about how often you breastfeed on a usual day. This will help you to keep your milk supply and stop mastitis. If you decide to leave your infant at home during your operation, you may wish to bring a breast pump to express breast milk. You can do this before and after your operation.

If you decide to bring your infant to hospital to carry on breastfeeding, another responsible adult will need to stay with you in hospital to look after your infant. You will not be able to look after your infant by yourself after your operation.

Our Infant Feeding Team will be able to help and support you during your hospital stay.

It is also important to think about whether you want to delay the operation until after weaning. This may not always be possible, and we will talk to you about this.

Do medicines used during my operation get into my breast milk?

A small amount of medicine will get into your breast milk. Almost all medicines are safe. They do not have any serious effects on your infant. This is because the amount the infant receives is so low. Some medicines can make you sleepy or drowsy. It is more likely that they will make your infant drowsy too.

Painkillers are important to keep you comfortable after your operation. Paracetamol and anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen and diclofenac are safe to use. We use stronger pain relief such as morphine and dihydrocodeine if you have very bad pain. These medicines affect people in different ways. They can also affect your infant in different ways. If it makes you or your infant very sleepy, you should stop taking it. Contact your doctor. If your infant has problems breathing, you should call NHS 111 and get medical advice straight away.

Where can I get further information from trusted resources?

If you have any questions before the day of your operation, please contact the Preoperative Assessment Team on 01732 261000 extension 2564. You can also contact our Infant Feeding Team on 01952 641222 extension 5954.

- The Breastfeeding Network, Anaesthetics and Breastfeeding Factsheet: www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/factsheet/anaesthetics/
- A 2020 guide from The Association of Anaesthetists 2020 Patient information leaflet: having an anaesthetic whilst breastfeeding. www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2023-04/anae15179-sup-0001-appendixs1.pdf

Further information is available from:



Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback which can be shared in a number of ways through the hospital website. Scan the QR code to give feedback. www.sath.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/patient-experience/feedback-hub/

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: [0800 783 0057](tel:08007830057) or [01743 261691](tel:01743261691)

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: [01952 282888](tel:01952282888)

Other Sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

111 (free from a landline or mobile) www.nhs.uk

Self Help & Support Groups

A selection of websites providing access to good quality health information, local organisations and community groups is available from the library. www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/

Information in Other Languages or Formats

If you require this information in a different way such as easy read, a different language, larger print, audio or braille please tell a member of staff or contact the Patient Experience Team;

sath.patientexperience@nhs.net or [01743 261000](tel:01743261000) ext. 2503.

Your information

Information about you and your healthcare is held by the NHS. You can find out more about how we hold your information and how it is used on our website: www.sath.nhs.uk

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

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