



Anesthesia for a child - preparation

The following information applies to the preparation of a child that needs anesthesia for a surgical operation or another medical procedure.

Telephone conversation about the anesthesia

The nurse anesthetist calls the child's guardians a few days before the procedure to inquire if there is anything regarding the child's health that needs to be taken into consideration in the planned anesthesia, provide information about preparation for the operation, and answer any questions. If any problems have occurred after previous administration of anesthesia, such as severe pain, nausea or vomiting, it is important to report them to reduce the risk of such problems reoccurring. If anything is unclear or further examination is required, there will be a preoperative interview at the hospital before the operation takes place.

The telephone conversation will include questions about:

- Previous experience with general or local anesthesia.
- Health and diseases.
- Height and weight.
- Allergies or intolerance to medicine.
- Use of medicine, including natural remedies and food supplements. If the child takes medication regularly, it is good to keep a list of medicines handy.

Preparation before anesthesia

Fasting

Fasting is necessary before the operation to reduce the risk of complications in connection with anesthesia. However, fasting for long periods of time is not good for the body and the child will feel better if the following instructions are followed:

- Solid food may be eaten until 6 hours before the scheduled arrival at the hospital.
- The child may drink formula or follow-on formula (stoðmjólk) until 4 hours before the scheduled arrival at the hospital.
- The child may drink breast milk until 3 hours before the scheduled arrival at the hospital.
- Clear drinks (not milk-based drinks) may be consumed until the time of arrival of at the hospital. Clear drinks are particle-free drinks without fat, such as water, sugar water, clear fruit juice or small popsicles (without chocolate and containing no milk).
 - » A child who is five years old or younger may drink half a glass.
 - » A child older than five years may drink a whole glass.
- After arrival at the hospital, staff will provide information about whether and for how long liquids may be drunk before the operation, and clear drinks may not be drunk in the last hour before the operation takes place.

It is recommended to give the child a clear beverage to drink or a small popsicle without milk or chocolate before leaving to go to the hospital.

Preparation game for children and their parents

There is a preparation game called *Mína og draumalandið* (Mina and the Land of Dreams). It is intended for children of ages 4-8 years. The purpose of the game is to help the child and their parents prepare for anesthesia administered in connection with medical treatment, and it can be a useful tool for parents to explain what is going to happen. It takes about 30 minutes to play the game.



Mina and the Land of Dreams
Hehto Oy
Designed for iPad
Free

The game is accessible in the App Store and on Google Play, and the best way to play it is on a tablet if there is one in the house. The game is downloaded by entering: "Mina and the land of dreams". A language is selected, either on the front page or by clicking on the settings gear icon in the top left corner. There is a selection of languages, including Icelandic, English and Finnish.

Toys

Some children like to bring their favourite toy to the hospital, such as a teddy bear, doll, or a book.

Arrival at the hospital

Upon arrival in the hospital ward, the child receives hospital clothes to put on, a medical bracelet with their name and identification number, and then lies down in a bed.

Before the operation takes place, consent must have been provided in writing for the operation and the anesthesia. To ensure safety, questions about important matters, such as the patient's name, identification number, allergies, fasting and type of operation, are asked repeatedly. Unexpected circumstances may cause the operation to be rescheduled.

An anxiolytic drug is often administered before the child is taken to the operating room. The child also gets one or more bandages with local anesthesia (EMLA) for the purpose of reducing the pain involved with the insertion of an intravascular catheter. Upon arrival in the operating room, further preparations are made.

Please note:

Some operations involve more risk if there is an infection present, and therefore it may be necessary to postpone the operation temporarily.

Symptoms of infection can include fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, coughing or other symptoms of the common cold.

Please notify the ward where the child's operation is to take place if the child exhibits symptoms of infection shortly before the scheduled date for the operation. If the ward is closed, the switchboard will be instructed to relay the information to the intended recipient.

Telephone numbers

Landspítali - switchboard

543 1000