

HIP & KNEE

repair, replacement and recovery

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

TYPES OF ANAESTHESIA

All patients are assessed pre-operatively to establish the safest and most appropriate anaesthetic technique for each individual. Your anaesthetist will discuss the clinical benefits of any techniques with you before you go to theatre.

There are two main types of anaesthesia that can be used for a total knee replacement: general anaesthesia and regional anaesthesia.

(1) General Anaesthesia

Advantages:

1. The patient is completely unconscious for the operative period. They will not remember anything between the period in the anaesthetic room and arrival in recovery after the operation is completed.
2. The surgeon is free to operate on a completely still patient.
3. In certain patients, especially those with some types of heart disease, it is safer for the operative period.

Disadvantages:

1. All the risks of general anaesthesia.
2. Damage to teeth or crowns.
3. Nausea.
4. Sore throat.
5. Allergy problems.
6. Detrimental effects on the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.
7. Pain in the recovery room on regaining consciousness.

(2) Regional Anaesthesia - Spinal or Epidural Anaesthesia

Advantages:

1. Good pain relief immediately post-operatively.
2. Low blood pressure during the procedure and no surges of blood pressure.

3. Better for patients with lung disease.
4. No sore throat or airway problems.
5. Reduced incidence of blood clots or venous thrombosis.
6. Better for frail, elderly patients with memory problems, as there is less post-operative confusion.

Disadvantages:

1. The patient may be aware of the procedure. However, it is possible to combine sedation with a regional anaesthetic.
2. Sometimes it is unsafe in heart disease.
3. The awake patient can be distracting to the surgeon. However, the patient can be sedated.
4. There is a risk of urinary retention.
5. If the patient is muscular or is having revision surgery, muscle relaxants cannot be used, which can make the operation more difficult.
6. Some patients may not be able to lie flat or still for the procedure. These patients may need a general anaesthetic.
7. Patients who have had back surgery may not be suitable for these techniques.

[Find more information about anaesthesia at](#)

The Royal College of Anaesthetists
<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/>

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
<http://www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/>

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