

You and Your Anaesthetic

For more information please visit www.rcoa.ac.uk/patientinfo

Reducing your risk



Stop smoking



Increase activity levels



Limit alcohol to recommended levels



Optimise diabetic control



Follow medication guidance pre-operatively



Follow fasting guidelines before surgery

Anaesthetic Risks



VERY COMMON – MORE THAN 1 IN 10
Equivalent to someone in your family



Sickness



Shivering



Thirst*



Sore throat



Bruising



Temporary memory loss
(mainly in over 60s)



COMMON – BETWEEN 1 IN 10 AND 1 IN 100
Equivalent to someone in a street



Pain at the injection site*



Minor lip or tongue injury



UNCOMMON – BETWEEN 1 IN 100 AND 1 IN 1,000
Equivalent to someone in a village



Minor nerve injury



RARE – BETWEEN 1 IN 1,000 AND 1 IN 10,000
Equivalent to someone in a small town



1 in 1,000
Peripheral nerve damage that is permanent



1 in 2,800
Corneal abrasion
(scratch on eye)



1 in 4,500
Damage to teeth



1 in 10,000
Anaphylaxis
(severe allergic reaction to a drug)



VERY RARE – 1 IN 10,000 TO 1 IN 100,000 OR MORE
Equivalent to someone in a large town



1 in 20,000

Awareness during an anaesthetic



1 in 100,000

Loss of vision



1 in 100,000

Death as a direct result of anaesthesia

The risks we all take in normal life, such as road travel, are actually far higher than the risks below.

