WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · AFTERCARE

Having an Operation Under Local Anaesthetic

What to expect before, during and after a procedure carried out under local anaesthetic at Waterfront Private Hospital.

Reviewed 5 July 2026 · Version 1.0

When to get help — your traffic light guide

RED

Call 999 or go to A&E now if you have:

These can be life-threatening. Do not wait to call the hospital first.

- Difficulty breathing, or swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat (signs of a severe allergic reaction)
- A widespread rash together with feeling faint or unwell
- Heavy bleeding from the wound that does not stop after 10 minutes of firm, constant pressure
- Chest pain, or suddenly feeling very unwell

AMBER

Contact us now — do not wait — if you have:

- Spreading redness, heat or swelling around the wound after the first 2–3 days
- Discharge of pus, or an offensive smell from the wound
- A temperature, or feeling hot, shivery and unwell
- Pain that is getting worse rather than better, or is not eased by simple pain relief

Office hours (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm): 0131 376 3785

Evenings and weekends during your early recovery: Out-of-Hours Nurse Advice Line 07405322689 — our nurse can advise you, contact your surgeon, or direct you to NHS services.

After your early recovery period: call the hospital in office hours, or NHS 24 on 111.

GREEN

Tell us at your next appointment:

- Mild bruising, tenderness or swelling at the site that is settling day by day
- Tingling or "pins and needles" as the numbness wears off
- A small amount of clear or blood-tinged ooze in the first 24 hours

Anything else that is niggling or worrying you — no concern is too small. Mention it at your next appointment, or call us during office hours.

What is a local anaesthetic?

A local anaesthetic numbs a specific area of the body so a procedure can be carried out without pain, while you stay fully awake and aware. It is injected into the skin around the area being treated and usually takes effect within 5–10 minutes.

You may feel a brief stinging as it goes in. During the procedure you may feel **pressure or movement, but no pain**. Some local anaesthetics contain a little adrenaline to reduce bleeding, which can cause a brief, harmless increase in heart rate or mild trembling.

If you feel any pain during the procedure, tell your surgeon straight away — more anaesthetic can be given.

Procedures we carry out under local anaesthetic

Local anaesthetic is used for a range of smaller procedures, including:

- Skin lesion, mole and cyst removal
- Split earlobe repair
- Direct brow lift
- Some eyelid procedures
- Neck liposuction
- Labiaplasty (where local anaesthetic is chosen)

Before your visit

- There is **no need to fast** — eat and drink normally, though you may prefer to avoid a heavy meal immediately beforehand.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing that gives easy access to the area being treated.
- Remove make-up from the area, and it is best to leave jewellery at home.

- Bring a list of your medicines and any allergies.
- If you take blood-thinning medicine (for example warfarin, clopidogrel, apixaban, or aspirin prescribed by a doctor), **do not stop it without advice** — discuss it with your surgeon at your pre-operative assessment, as stopping some of these carries its own risks.

On the day and during your procedure

- Please arrive 15–30 minutes early for check-in.
- Our nursing team will check your blood pressure, pulse and temperature.
- Your surgeon will go over the procedure with you and answer any questions before numbing the area.
- You will be awake throughout and can talk to the team; you should feel pressure or movement but no pain.

After your procedure

- You will be looked after in the recovery area for about 15–30 minutes.
- The numbness usually wears off within 1–2 hours; tingling as sensation returns is normal.
- You may drive once you feel completely normal and alert — usually after 1–2 hours — but arrange a lift if you would feel more comfortable.
- Keep the area clean and dry, and follow any dressing instructions you are given.
- Most people return to work the same or the next day; avoid strenuous activity and swimming for as long as your surgeon advises.

Pain relief at home

Most discomfort after a local-anaesthetic procedure is mild and short-lived. Take the painkillers your nurse gives you, or **paracetamol and ibuprofen** taken together as directed on the packet, unless you have been told otherwise. Read the packet, and ask your pharmacist if you are unsure.

Side effects

- Common and temporary: mild swelling, redness, bruising or tenderness at the site, and tingling as the numbness wears off.
- Uncommon: infection at the site (reduced by keeping it clean and dry), or numbness that takes a little longer than usual to settle.

- Rare: an allergic reaction to the anaesthetic — see the red-flag guidance above, and call 999 if it is severe.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will it hurt?

You may feel a brief stinging as the local anaesthetic is injected, but once it takes effect (usually within 5–10 minutes) you should feel pressure and movement but no pain. If you do feel pain during the procedure, tell your surgeon straight away.

How long will the numbness last?

The numbness usually wears off within 1–2 hours. You may feel tingling as sensation returns, which is completely normal.

Can I drive home?

You can drive once you feel completely normal and alert, usually 1–2 hours after your procedure. If you would feel more comfortable, arrange for someone to take you home.

Do I need someone with me?

It is not essential, as a local anaesthetic is mild. Many people still find it reassuring to have someone with them, and it can help if you feel a little light-headed afterwards.

When can I return to work?

Most people return to work the same day or the next day, depending on the procedure and your job. Avoid strenuous activity for the time your surgeon advises.

Do I need to fast beforehand?

No. Fasting is not needed for a local-anaesthetic procedure — you can eat and drink normally, though you may prefer a lighter meal beforehand.

Will I be awake during the procedure?

Yes. You will be awake and aware throughout, and can talk to your surgeon and the nursing team. The area being treated will be numb.

What if I have allergies?

Tell your surgeon about any allergies, especially to local anaesthetics or other medicines, at your pre-operative assessment. Allergic reactions to modern local anaesthetics are very rare, but your team needs your full history.