







Common events and risks

for children and young people having a general anaesthetic

This summary card shows some of the common events and risks that healthy children and young people of normal weight face when having a general anaesthetic (GA) for routine surgery (specialist operations may carry different risks).

Modern anaesthetics are very safe. There are some common side effects which are usually not serious or long lasting. Risk will vary between individuals, and will depend on the procedure and the anaesthetic technique used. Your anaesthetist will discuss with you the risks they believe to be most significant. You should also discuss with them anything you feel is important to you.

Very common

More than 1 in **10**Equivalent to one person in your family





Sore throat



Agitation on waking from GA

Mainly ages 1–6 years



Sickness



Temporary changes in behaviour

eg, anxiety, sleep problems, bedwetting

Common

Between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 Equivalent to one person in a street





Minor lip or tongue injury



Discomfort at injection site



Our website has more on these risks as well as short videos to help children prepare for surgery.



and 1 in **1,000**Equivalent to one person in a village





Breathing problems
Needing treatment



Skin damageMainly longer
procedures



Scan to find out more:



rcoa.ac.uk/ childrensinfo

Rare

Between 1 in **1,000** and 1 in **10,000** Equivalent to one person in a small town

Equivalent to one

person in a large town





Need for Intensive Care (unplanned)

1 in **2,400** Risk is higher for children under 1 year

1 in **40,000**

Severe allergic reaction

to a drug

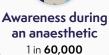


Injury to eye eg, scratch on eye



Damage to teeth

Very Rare
1 in 10,000 to 1
in 100,000 or more
Anaphylaxis
Awareness during
Death as a direct



Death as a direct result of anaesthesia
1 in 100,000 to
1 in a million



Things we all do in normal life, such as road travel, involve higher risks than the **Very Rare** risks above.





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