



**Preoperative assessment clinic (UEP), CHVR**

Internet : <http://www.hopitalvs.ch/uep>



Société suisse  
d'anesthésiologie  
et de réanimation

**UEP Sion** Tél. 027/603 4592  
**UEP Martigny** Tél. 027/603 9821  
**UEP Sierre** Tél. 027/603 7596

E-mail : [sion.uep@hopitalvs.ch](mailto:sion.uep@hopitalvs.ch)  
E-mail : [martigny.uep@hopitalvs.ch](mailto:martigny.uep@hopitalvs.ch)  
E-mail : [sierre.uep@hopitalvs.ch](mailto:sierre.uep@hopitalvs.ch)

Dear patient,

In order to help you undergo your surgical intervention under the best possible conditions and with minimal pain, you will receive an anaesthetic. Your anaesthetist will explain the necessary proceedings and will inform you about the anaesthetic technique which best suits your needs.

## The main anaesthetic techniques

### 1. General anaesthesia

A general anaesthesia will put the patient profoundly asleep and will completely suppress any painful sensations during the whole intervention, with the help of different drugs. Often artificial breathing (ventilation) is required for the time of the operation, of which you will not be aware.

### 2. Regional or locoregional anaesthesia

It is often possible to numb only the relevant part of the body. While being under such a regional or locoregional anaesthesia you can choose between staying completely awake or receiving a light sleeping drug which makes you doze or go to sleep. In case your local anaesthesia is not adequate, it is possible at every moment to add pain medication, or to put you to sleep completely.

The main types of regional anaesthesia are the following:

- **Anaesthesia of the spinal cord**

A local anaesthetic drug is injected either into the cerebrospinal liquid around the spinal cord (spinal anaesthesia), or into the small space situated between the dura mater and the vertebrae (epidural anaesthesia). This will make the relevant parts of your body go completely numb during a certain time. You may first have a feeling of warmth, followed by an increasing loss of touch and mobility.

- **Other methods of locoregional anaesthesia**

A local anaesthetic drug can also be injected next to one or several nerves, for example in order to numb your hand and/or your arm.

### **3. Combined anaesthesia**

In case you need to undergo an important intervention, the two anaesthetic methods can be applied at the same time, with the aim to facilitate the treatment of pain after your surgery.

#### **Safety and side effects of an anaesthesia**

All forms of modern anaesthesia are highly safe. The risks associated with an anaesthetic are minimal, even for very sick patients. All body functions, such as heartbeat, the blood circulation and your breathing, will be monitored.

If necessary, all required corrections will immediately be undertaken. Thus complications and incidents related to modern anaesthetic techniques are very rare.

However, a general anaesthesia may cause dental problems, especially in patients who have a bad dentition to start with.

Some neurologic complications can occur after a locoregional anaesthesia. Rarely, a loss of sensation can occur which lasts longer than anticipated, and very rarely the sensation can be altered or definitely lost. Some cases of prolonged or even permanent paralysis have been described, but those are extremely rare.

There are also several side effects of short duration that can occur with relation to an anaesthesia, for example hoarseness, trouble swallowing, nausea and vomiting, shivering, feelings of cold or trouble with the first voiding. Different methods and drugs exist to treat pain after surgery, and they will be applied according to your individual needs.

#### **Special procedures**

In case it is necessary to apply further and special measures there can be an additional risk, such as when central lines are inserted or when blood products are transfused.

#### **For your safety**

During the hours preceding your anaesthesia it is of utmost importance that you refrain from eating and drinking. Please follow exactly the instructions that will be given to you. On the day of surgery, please do not take any treatments or drugs without being authorized by your doctor. We also ask you to remove any contact lenses, false teeth, piercings and jewelry.

If you leave hospital on the day of surgery (ambulatory surgery or day surgery), please make sure that someone will attend to you. In general, until the next day, you should not remain on your own in public spaces, drive a car, take important decisions or drink alcoholic beverages.

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## Some general information

Your anaesthetist will inform you personally about the choice of the anaesthetic technique and the necessary proceedings. This leaflet is designed to provide you with some preliminary information before your interview with the anaesthetist. Do not hesitate to ask questions concerning any aspects which may be unclear. You can write down your questions below. Should you wish any further precisions before or after the intervention, please contact the department secretary or, in case of emergency, your hospital doctor.

Hôpital du Valais, as a public hospital, also has the task of training healthcare professionals. This means your anaesthesia might be the subject of staff training. Any such training will always be supervised by a doctor specialised in the discipline.

Teamwork is one of the necessary conditions for the smooth running of our hospital. For this reason, it is possible that the receiving doctor who explained your procedure to you might not be the doctor who performs the anaesthesia.

Your anaesthetist will also inform you that you have a right to ask for a 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion and can instruct you how you can arrange this.

## Your questions

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## Additional notes by the anaesthetist concerning the patient interview and information (for example, according to the severity of the intervention)

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*By my signature I confirm that I have read and understood the information in this document. I give my consent to be treated by the anaesthetic service CHVR for the designated intervention whit my surgeon.*

Date : .....

Patient signature :

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Signature of anaesthetist :

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