



Paediatric information

Routine pregnancy testing before a general anaesthetic – your questions answered.

This leaflet is aimed at girls aged 12 years old or above and explains why we do this test, including some frequently asked questions.

If there is anything that you still do not understand after reading this leaflet, please ask a nurse or doctor to explain and they will be happy to talk to you in private. Remember, everything you tell us is confidential. Information you give us would only be shared if we thought that either you or another person might not be safe.

What is a general anaesthetic?

Before your operation the anaesthetist will give you medication to send you to sleep. This is called a general anaesthetic. An anaesthetist is a doctor who specialises in anaesthetics and they will make sure you stay asleep for the whole operation.

Why should I have a pregnancy test before a general anaesthetic?

A general anaesthetic could harm an unborn baby and this is especially true at the beginning of a pregnancy when people might not even realise that they are pregnant.

Why do I have to have a pregnancy test if I am not in a relationship?

We know that many teenage girls may not be having sex and therefore it is not possible for them to be pregnant. However as we don't know who is and who isn't in a sexually active relationship, we need to test **all girls aged over 12 years** to be on the safe side.

What happens if I refuse to be tested?

If you refuse to be tested the anaesthetist and surgeon will be told and your operation might be cancelled.

How will the test be done?

On the day of your operation, if you are 12 years or older the nurse looking after you will ask you for a sample of your urine so that we can test it in private straight away.

What happens next?

This depends on the result.

- If the test is negative (this means you are not pregnant) we will tell you the result in private and record it in your health record.

-If the test is positive (this means you are pregnant) we will talk to you and support you. The anaesthetist and surgeon will decide whether your operation will go ahead or whether it should be postponed. If you would like to tell your parents or carers we can help you. If we need to tell your parents or carers we will explain to you why this is needed before we talk to them. For example, if you are under 16 years old we will need to contact services local to where you live to help and support you. This may include your GP, school nurse or social services (a service that can make sure you are safe and looked after). We will always talk to you about this before we contact them.

Why has Moorfields introduced this pregnancy testing for all girls aged 12 years and over?

This was introduced following advice from national healthcare organisations including the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RPCPH) to make surgical care safer.

Author: Paediatric information group

Revision number: 1

Approval date: September 2019 Review date: September 2022

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust City Road, London EC1V 2PD Phone: 020 7253 3411 www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm
Saturday, 9am-5pm
Information and advice on eye
conditions and treatments from
experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325 Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs

