

Caring for someone who has had a general anaesthetic or sedation

I have been asked to take my relative or friend home after they have had sedation for their treatment or a procedure under general anaesthetic.

What should I expect?

The sedation medicine or anaesthetic can make some patients slightly confused and unsteady after their treatment. Importantly, it can affect their judgement so they may not be able to think clearly. This may last for up to 24 hours, so until the next day. Please take care of them during this time.

When can I collect my friend or relative?

Staff in the hospital will only allow them to go home when they have recovered and you are there to accompany them. You must be over 18 years old and should take them home by car or taxi – ideally not public transport.

They will not be able to give you an exact time as some patients take longer than others to recover after sedation or surgery.

Will I be told what I need to do?

The doctors will give written instructions of what to do after their procedure and whether they need to take any extra medicines.

Please read these instructions with your relative or friend and make sure that they are followed.

There will be a telephone number to contact if you or they have any worries about their treatment when they get home.

What should my friend or relative do at home?

They should rest to help them recover safely.

If they are unsteady, they should walk with you if they need to and avoid stairs if possible.

They should take their usual medicines unless they are told not to by their doctor.

What should they not do?

They may not be able to think clearly after an anaesthetic or after they have been given sedation medicine for up to 24 hours. During this time they should not:

- be in charge of children or other people in their care
- drive a vehicle or ride a bicycle
- cook or use any machinery
- make any important decisions, even if they think they feel OK
- post anything on social media
- drink alcohol.



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RCoA

Royal College of Anaesthetists



Tell us what you think

We welcome suggestions to improve this leaflet. If you have any comments that you would like to make, please email them to patientinformation@rcoa.ac.uk

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