

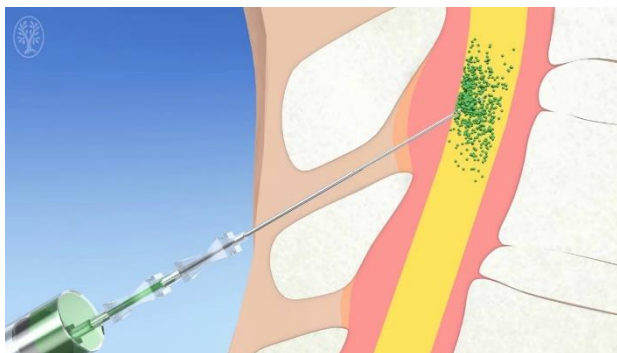
Spinal anaesthetic



Spinal anaesthetics make pain-free procedures below the navel (tummy button) possible. By injecting an anaesthetic into the nerves that run from the area of the operation to the spinal cord, the lower abdomen, pelvic area and legs lose all feeling.

To achieve this, a local anaesthetic is injected into the part of the lumbar spine that is filled with nerve fluid (cerebrospinal fluid space).

A spinal anaesthetic is administered with you sitting down or lying on your side. After numbing the area, the anaesthetist inserts a thin needle into your back into a space between the vertebrae in your lower lumbar spine. Once the anaesthetist reaches the cerebrospinal fluid space, s/he injects a small amount of local anaesthetic. You will experience a feeling of warmth in your legs and will soon either not be able to move your legs at all or only move them to a limited degree. The effect will last for several hours.



Risks and side effects of a spinal anaesthetic

In the following section we provide information about possible risks and side effects of a regional anaesthetic administered close to the spinal cord (spinal anaesthetic) by responding to frequently asked questions. Ultimately, it is best if we provide you with an in-depth explanation in a personal discussion that takes into account your personal needs and circumstances.

Frequently asked questions about a spinal anaesthetic:

“Will the anaesthetic last for as long as the operation takes? What happens if the operation takes longer than expected?”

If the effect of the spinal anaesthetic is not strong enough to allow pain-free surgery for you or if other complications occur, it may be necessary to switch to a general anaesthetic. This means that you do not need to worry about pain. If the anaesthetic wears off, you can be given additional pain medicine through the infusion (drip).

“Will I be awake during the operation?”

That depends on you. If you would like to, you can be awake to experience the operation. However, if you would rather sleep, we can add a sleeping medicine to your infusion. You can also relax by listening to music through headphones.

“Can I watch the operation?”

With any type of surgery, the most important issue is to prevent bacteria and other damaging micro-organisms from entering the body. For this reason, the skin is carefully disinfected beforehand and the area to be operated on is covered with sterile drapes on all sides, which means you will not be able to watch. However, if you are having an endoscopic examination (e.g. a joint arthroscopy), you may under certain circumstances be able to follow the procedure on a monitor.

“Could a regional anaesthetic close to the spinal cord cause lasting damage?”

All materials and medicines used for a spinal anaesthetic have been specially developed to ensure that the risk of nerve damage is as low as possible. This means that lasting damage is extremely rare nowadays.

“How high is the risk of an anaesthesia-related incident?”

The risk of severe anaesthesia-related incidents has been significantly reduced by continuous care provided by your anaesthetist and close monitoring through technical devices. Although many patients are operated on as emergencies or are seriously unwell, severe anaesthesia-related incidents are extremely rare these days, which means there is no need for you to worry unnecessarily about this.