

# Regional Spinal Anaesthetic

## What Is Regional Anaesthetic?

Anaesthesia means the absence of sensation. Regional anaesthesia means blocking the nerve supply to part of the body, so the patient cannot feel pain in that area. It can often be used to prevent pain during surgery and allows the patient to remain awake. When combined with sedative drugs, it will make the patient relaxed or sleepy.

## Will It Hurt?

Most regional anaesthetic techniques involve using a syringe and needle to inject drugs in the correct place. Unfortunately, this can often be uncomfortable, and the local anaesthetic may sting during the injection. Most patients consider this discomfort a small price to pay for the pain relief during and after surgery.

## What Are the Potential Side Effects and/or Complications?

In general, regional anaesthesia is very safe and usually safer than a general anaesthetic. The most common side-effect of blocking is temporary weakness or paralysis of the affected area and wears off after a while.

All medical procedures have risks and benefits. For many operations, the risk/benefit ratio for regional anaesthesia is better than for general anaesthesia. Patients should discuss this issue with their physician.

Bluewater Health provides options to facilitate family-centred Caesarean births, in accordance with national guidelines:

- Choosing regional anaesthesia, where possible, and explaining the differences between regional and general anaesthesia; and
- Enabling the support person to be in the Caesarean birth room in non-emergency situations.