

# RCOA

Royal College of Anaesthetists



Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of  
Great Britain and Ireland

# Rees Bear has an anaesthetic

A story for younger children about having  
an anaesthetic



Read suggestions for parents on the back page.

## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



### Hi, I'm Rees

Last week I had an anaesthetic at the hospital.

An anaesthetic is when a doctor gives you medicine so that you don't feel, hear or see anything during a test or operation. It's a bit like a really deep sleep.

The doctor gives you the anaesthetic for as long as you need it and when they stop the anaesthetic you wake up.

Shall I tell you what it was like for me?

Can you help me find Zoe the zebra, my favourite toy, on each page?



## Getting ready

It's best if you take a few things with you to the hospital. I packed some pyjamas, my toothbrush, a book and my favourite toy.



## No eating

You must not have any food in your tummy when you have an anaesthetic, so I couldn't have anything to eat. I had a drink of water so that I wouldn't feel too thirsty.

# Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



## Meeting the nurse

At the hospital, a **nurse** weighed me on the scales so the doctors would know how much medicine to give me later.

The nurse checked my temperature and gave me a name band for my wrist to tell everyone I was **Rees Bear**.



## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic

### Different kinds of anaesthetic

I met my **anaesthetist**. That's the doctor who looked after me during my anaesthetic. Anaesthetics can be started with a tiny tube in your hand or with a mask. We talked about the best way for me.

You can have cream on your hands to stop the tiny tube from feeling too sore. The anaesthetic medicine goes into the tiny tube and works very fast indeed.





The mask smells like felt-tip pens and takes a bit longer to work. You still need a tiny tube in your hand after the mask in case you need more medicines later, but you can't feel anything after the mask.



## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



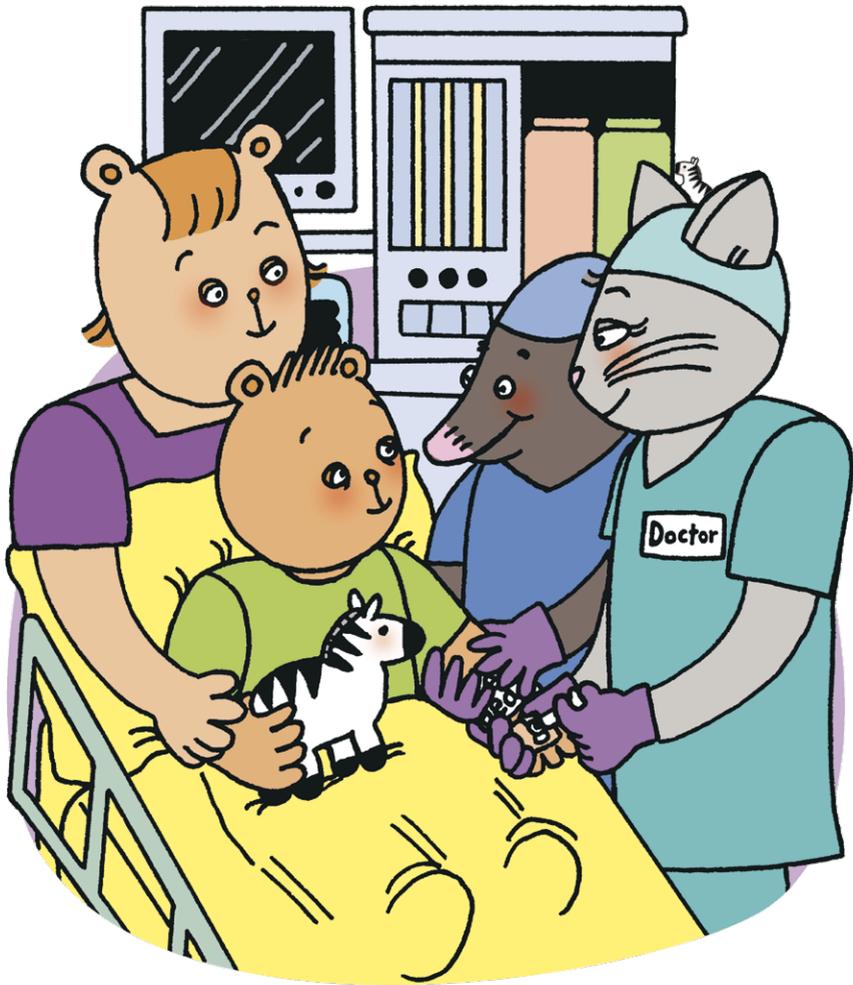
### Nearly time for the operation

I had a bit of time to play before my operation. My nurse asked me to put on a hospital gown. Some children were wearing pyjamas instead.

You might be given some medicine on the ward. This could be to stop you from feeling sore after the operation or to help you feel sleepy before it.



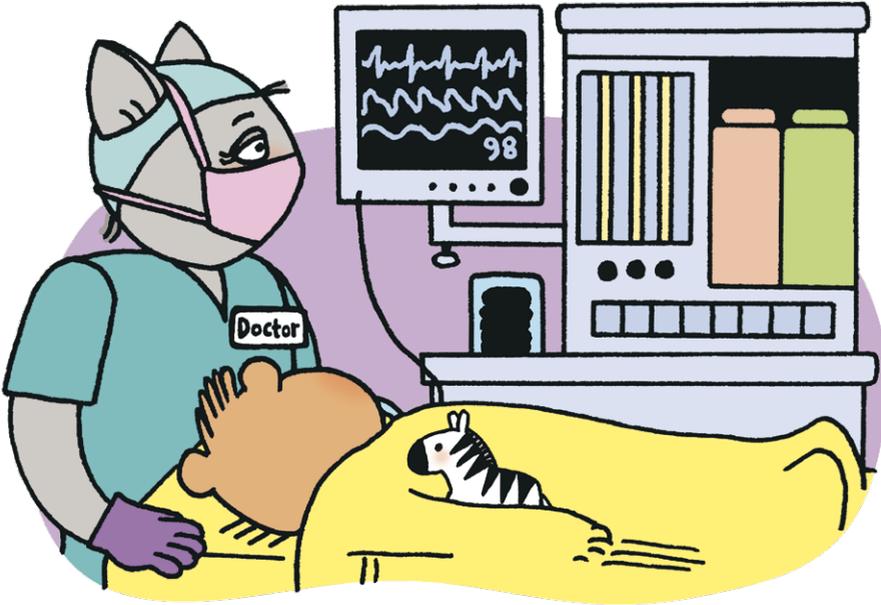
## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



### The anaesthetic room

In the anaesthetic room there were machines called **monitors** to help look after me all the time. One of my parents could come with me into the room.

Then when I was asleep my parents waited for me. I knew they weren't far away.



## During my operation

I don't remember anything, but my anaesthetist stayed with me all the time. They looked after me and gave me the anaesthetic.

## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



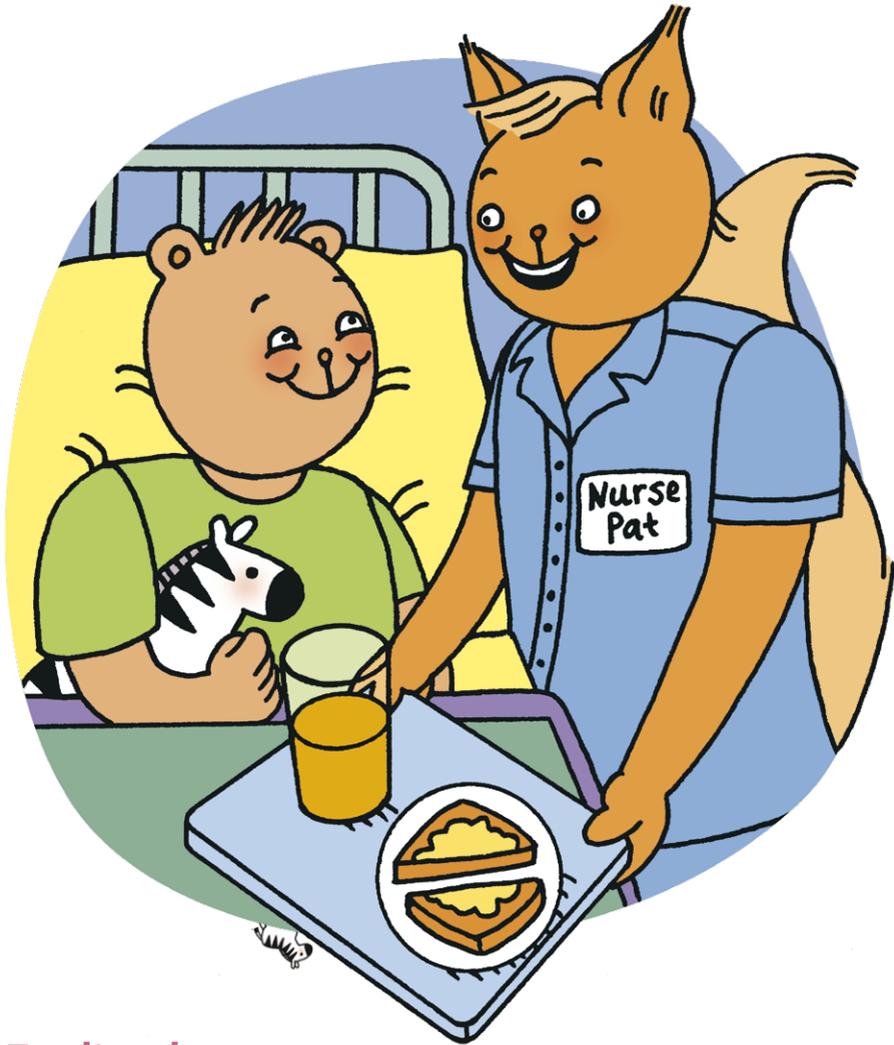
### The recovery room

When my operation was finished, the anaesthetist turned off the anaesthetic medicine so I could wake up. A nurse looked after me in the recovery room until my parents could be with me.

I felt a tiny bit sore at first. The nurse gave me some medicine straight away, and soon I felt better.



## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



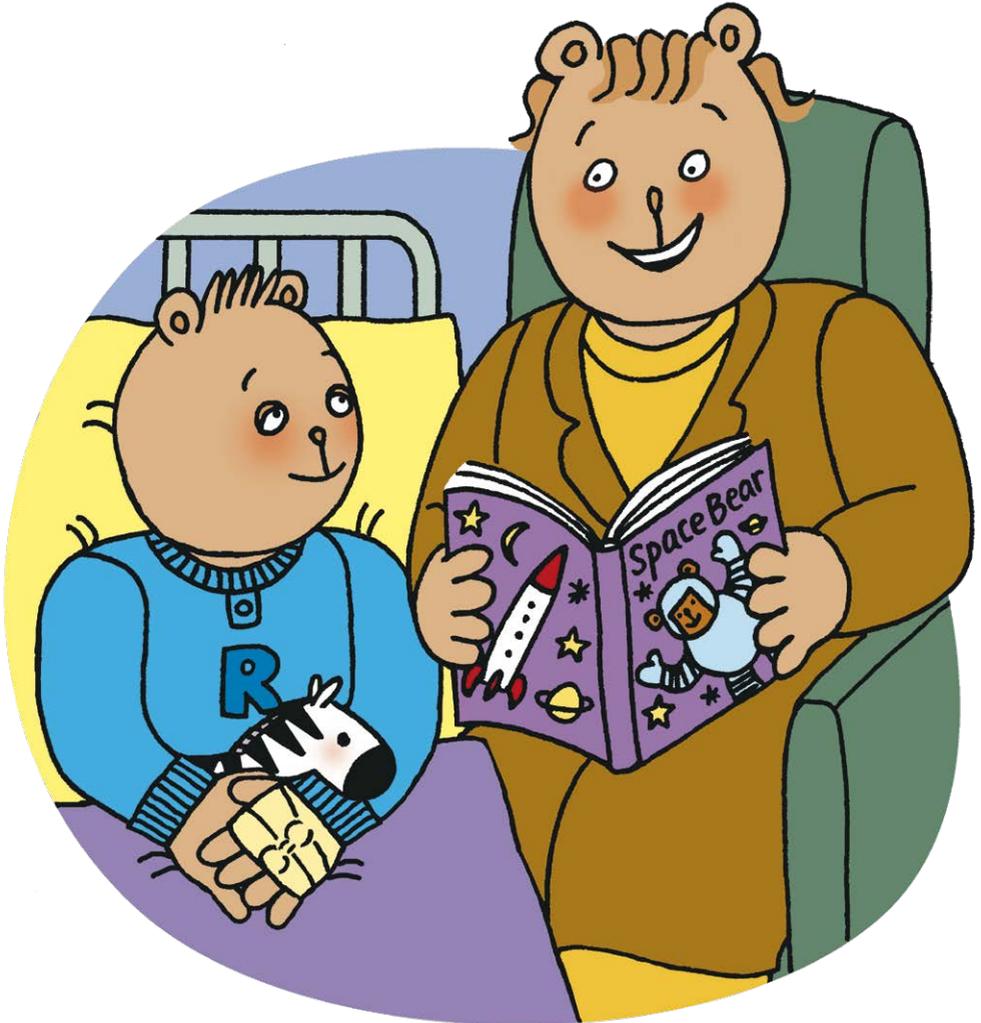
### Feeling hungry

When I started to feel hungry again, the nurse let me have something to eat and drink.

That felt better.

## Staying in hospital

I needed to stay in hospital for one night.  
One of my parents could stay with me.



## Rees Bear has an anaesthetic



### Time to go home

Everyone at the hospital was very kind, but I was glad when it was time to go home.

Would you like to colour in this picture of me?

**Bye bye!**



# Rees Bear has an anaesthetic

## Who's who and what's what

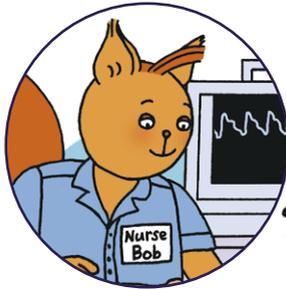


### Anaesthetist

The doctor who gives you the anaesthetic medicine, and then looks after you until it's time to wake up again.

### Nurses

People who look after you when you are having an operation.



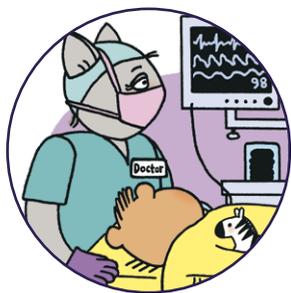
### Play specialist

Someone in hospital who helps you play and understand what is happening to you. Not all hospitals have play specialists.

### Operating department practitioners (ODPs) and theatre nurses

People who help the anaesthetist to look after you while you have your anaesthetic.



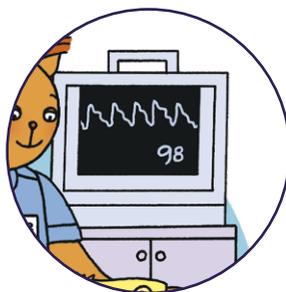


## Theatre

A room in a hospital where operations are done. Everything is very clean and the people working there wear clothes like pyjamas and hats to keep their hair tidy.

## Monitor

A machine the anaesthetist uses to keep a close eye on you while you have your anaesthetic. It uses some stickers on your chest and a peg on your finger to check how fast your heart is beating and how well you are breathing.



## Recovery room or post-anaesthetic care unit (PACU)

The room where children wake up after anaesthetics.

# Rees Bear has an anaesthetic

## How to use this leaflet

### Information for parents



We have designed this leaflet for you to read with your child and to help them to prepare for their anaesthetic. It will introduce some of the people they may meet and some of the things which might happen. You can substitute the person or people in the pictures with whoever will go to the hospital with your child as this will vary between families. Explain to your child why you are reading them this story. It is important to find out what the story means to them and see if they have any questions.

It can help to allow your child to play out the story and deal with any worries they may have using a familiar toy. Some children may choose to draw or paint about their feelings.

If your child is over the age of three, we suggest you prepare them during the week before their anaesthetic. For children under three, we suggest you prepare them the day before coming to the hospital. However, please take your own child's understanding into consideration.

---

## 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](mailto:patientinformation@rcoa.ac.uk)

### Royal College of Anaesthetists

Churchill House  
35 Red Lion Square  
London WC1R 4SG  
020 7092 1500

[rcoa.ac.uk](http://rcoa.ac.uk)



### Third edition, February 2020

This leaflet will be reviewed within three years of publication.

### © 2020 Royal College of Anaesthetists and Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland

This leaflet may be copied for the purpose of producing patient information materials. Please quote this original source. If you wish to use part of this leaflet in another publication, suitable acknowledgement must be given and the logos, branding and images removed. For more information, please contact us.

Illustrations by Amanda Lillywhite