A local anaesthetic is a drug that is injected into the tissues to make them numb, so that a procedure can be carried out without causing pain to the patient. Local anaesthesia provides an effective method of pain relief during and after the procedure. A local anaesthetic has been recommended for you. We highly recommend that you have a local anaesthetic for all surgical procedures.

**How does local anaesthesia work?**

Local anaesthetics work by temporarily stopping nerves from working so that you do not feel pain. The simplest form of local anaesthesia is to inject the anaesthetic around the tooth that is to be removed. Sometimes a nerve block is given especially with lower teeth that are to be removed. A nerve block is simply when the nerve is numbed at the back of your mouth rather than numbed around the tooth.

We will not start the procedure until we are sure that the area is fully numb. Once we start sometimes patients may feel a little pain, please inform your surgeon immediately so that we can add more anaesthetic.

Local anaesthetics generally work for a few hours, depending on the type of anaesthetic and dose given. After this time the area should go back to normal.

**Alternatives to a local anaesthetic**

If you are concerned about being awake during the procedure, it may be possible for it to be performed under sedation. Please let your own dentist know so that they can make the appropriate referral to our clinic.

**Complications**

We will endeavour to make the local anaesthetic as safe as possible but complications can happen. Some of these can be serious and can even cause death. Possible complications associated with local anaesthetics include:

* Not enough pain relief, this can be solved by giving more local anaesthetic.
* Allergy to local anaesthesia- this is very rare. Please let the team know if you have reacted to local anaesthetics before or reacted to sulphites or to any medications or tests in the past.
* Bleeding can occur if the needle strikes a blood vessel during the injecting process. This usually results in a small bruise that will not cause problems and should disappear within a couple of weeks.
* Nerve damage- risk: 1 in 5,000. Sometimes the numbness can last up to two days but usually gets better.
* Local anaesthetic toxicity, sometimes patients can feel unwell after receiving local anaesthesia, this can last up to a few days, but usually gets better. If you have experienced this in the past please let the team know so that we can use an alternative local anaesthetic that may lessen your symptoms.

Local anaesthesia can be used for most people, usually giving a safe effective form of pain relief during and after the procedure. However, complications can happen. You need to know about them so that you can make an informed decision about the anaesthetic being used to treat you.