

April 2026

Important information for Venezuelan families about general anaesthesia and surgery

If you or your child has a Venezuelan family background, please tell your doctors this whenever you go, or are planning to go, to hospital for an operation (surgery). Telling your doctors this information is especially important if your mother, or your child's mother, is from Venezuela, especially Carabobo State.

Your doctors include your specialist anaesthetist, your surgeon and your general practitioner. The information will help your specialist anaesthetist to choose medicines (anaesthetic) that reduce health risks while you or your child are asleep for the surgery.

This advice is being given because of recent reports from Latin America and the United States of America (USA) about a very small number of patients, with a Venezuelan background (mostly children) who had a harmful reaction to certain anaesthetic medicines.

No reports have been made in Australia or New Zealand about hospital patients with a Venezuelan family background experiencing harm because of an anaesthetic medicine.

Specialist anaesthetists in Venezuela and in the USA are researching whether there is a link between the genetics of people with a Venezuelan mother and harmful reactions to certain anaesthetic medicines.

Important message

If you or your child has a Venezuelan family background, especially a mother from Carabobo State, please tell the doctor who is giving the anaesthetic (your anaesthetist) this information whenever you or your child go, or are planning to go, to hospital for surgery.

Sources:

ANZCA-SPANZA joint statement: <https://www.anzca.edu.au/news-and-safety-alerts/reports-of-susceptibility-to-general-anaesthetics-in-certain-patients-of-venezuelan-origin>

[Joint Communication from the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the Society for Pediatric Anesthesia \(January 2026\)](#)

[Rare Gene Mutation in Some with Venezuelan Ancestry Linked to Severe Neurologic Complications and Death After General Anesthesia \(28 January 2026\).](#)