



Monday 18 October 2021

### Pain relief and having a baby: New campaign launched

A new pregnancy information campaign developed by anaesthetists has been launched to inform patients about pain relief before, during, and after childbirth.

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists' (ANZCA) "Anaesthesia and having a baby" campaign is aimed at people who are not only preparing to give birth but also patients who may require an operation during their pregnancy. It is being held to coincide with ANZCA's National Anaesthesia Day.

ANZCA President Dr Vanessa Beavis says while every birth is different, it's common and natural to experience some degree of discomfort during labour.

"Your midwife and obstetrician can help you to manage mild and moderate birthing pain, but if you need stronger, longer lasting relief or require a caesarean delivery, they'll invite an anaesthetist to join your birthing team. You might not need the care of an anaesthetist when you're carrying and delivering your baby, but it's good to know what your options are."

Dr Beavis says it is not uncommon for people to undergo operations or procedures that aren't related to their pregnancy.

"We want to reassure people that if they do require an operation before giving birth that their anaesthetist will ensure they are given the appropriate treatment that will not harm their baby. And of course during childbirth your anaesthetist will be on hand to provide the most appropriate pain relief you need."

"Surgical procedures involving all types of anaesthesia are generally safe for you and your baby at any stage in your pregnancy, as well as during breastfeeding. But everyone is different, and some anaesthetic drugs or techniques may not be suitable in some situations. "

"Your anaesthetist will assess your condition and tailor your treatment to your individual needs. They'll also be happy to talk you through the process and answer any questions you have."

ANZCA's National Anaesthesia Day is on Monday 18 October. The suite of resources at

anzca.edu.au includes a short animated video that anaesthetists and hospitals can use to inform pregnant patients about what to expect before, during and after childbirth.

Australia is one of the safest places to have a surgical procedure involving anaesthesia, and our anaesthetists are among the most highly trained specialist doctors on the planet. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Core Maternity Indicators report 94 per cent of the anaesthetic procedures provided for caesarean sections are epidurals.

Key questions about anaesthesia for pregnant patients that are answered in ANZCA's National Anaesthesia Day fact sheets include:

- Why would I need an epidural?
- Can I have anaesthesia when I'm pregnant?
- How soon can feed my baby after having anaesthesia?

ANZCA, as one of Australia and New Zealand's largest specialist medical colleges with 7500 specialist anaesthetists (fellows) and 500 specialist pain medicine physicians, is responsible for the training, examination and specialist accreditation of anaesthetists and pain medicine specialists and for the standards of clinical practice in Australia and New Zealand.

For more information or to request interviews, please contact ANZCA Media Manager Carolyn Jones on +61 3 8517 5303, +61 408 259 369 or [cjones@anzca.edu.au](mailto:cjones@anzca.edu.au). Follow us on Twitter @ANZCA #NAD21.