



Anaesthetists warn of medication reactions during operations

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A new patient information campaign is warning Australians preparing for an operation that some medications they are taking for certain health conditions may react with their anaesthetic and could affect their recovery.

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) says some medical conditions such as type 2 diabetes or an allergy to pholcodine, a commonly used ingredient in cough medicines, can make patients more sensitive to anaesthetic drugs so they may longer to recover from operations.

More than three million Australians have a general anaesthetic each year as part of an operation or a procedure.

Understanding what you can do to prepare for your operation is the focus of ANZCA National Anaesthesia Day being held on Wednesday, October 16. The day marks the first time ether anaesthetic was demonstrated in Boston in 1846.

National Anaesthesia Day 2019 encourages patients to talk to their anaesthetist about current medications and conditions they have that may affect their anaesthetic.

Key advice for patients preparing for anaesthesia includes:

- Have a list of your prescription medication as well as your allergies to share with your anaesthetist. You may be asked to stop taking some medication before your operation.
- If you are diabetic, make sure your sugar levels are tested and at or near your normal level.
- Take only your prescribed medications before your operation as herbal treatments may also react with anaesthetic drugs.
- Don't overexercise in the 24 hours before surgery or drink excess alcohol, as you could become dehydrated.

ANZCA President Dr Rod Mitchell encouraged anyone who was unsure about their operation to discuss it with their anaesthetist beforehand.

"If you want to know more about your anaesthesia or surgery don't 'Dr Google' it. Contact your anaesthetist directly or through the hospital or your surgeon's office. They will be happy to advise you."

Hospitals in Australia are supporting National Anaesthesia Day 2019 with foyer displays and activities aimed at informing patients and their families about anaesthesia.