



## Lesson Plan: Post-operative Care Teacher Guide

**Topic:** describing post-operative care

**Timing:** 30–45 minutes

**Lesson type/focus:** speaking, reading, vocabulary and writing

### Aims:

- **Speaking:** discuss aspects of post-operative care
- **Reading:** read for specific information
- **Vocabulary:** learn and review equipment used in post-operative care
- **Writing:** practise organising and presenting information

### Overview

The focus of the lesson is describing the care patients receive immediately after surgery. The speaking activity introduces the topic and gives students the opportunity to share their ideas and experience. The reading activity practises reading for specific information and reviews key terms some of which are represented in the vocabulary activity. The writing activity uses language from the lesson and students' own knowledge to produce a piece of patient-centred writing.

**Note:** This lesson supports the language introduced in the following:

- Course, [‘English for Nurses’](#)
- Unit: ‘Post-operative Care’
- Module: ‘Post-operative Care’ pages 6, 8 and 9

## Teaching notes and answer key

### Part 1: speaking

Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss questions 1–3 on the student worksheet. Encourage them to share examples from their own experience.

Do whole class feedback to discuss and share answers.

### Suggested answers

1. What kinds of anaesthetics are there?

*Students' answers may include*

*general anaesthetic (GA)*

*local anaesthetic (LA)*

*spinal anaesthetic, epidural*

A summary of anaesthesia can be found here:

[Royal College of Anaesthetists: Anaesthesia explained](#)



2. What sort of things do Recovery Nurses talk about during a post-operative handover?  
*Recovery Nurses pass on information that is important for the immediate care of a patient after an operation, e.g. name of the operation, type of anaesthesia used (some anaesthetics require special care, e.g. spinal anaesthetics), any equipment which is in situ (in place), vital signs (observations).*

3. What sort of equipment might be used in the Recovery Room?  
*catheter, IV fluids, drain, dressing, wounds closure (sutures, staples, clips), PCA (for pain relief), plaster cast, traction*

You might want to look at the difference in meaning and use of *anaesthesia* and *anaesthetic* and practise the pronunciation.

**anaesthesia** (US anesthesia) /,anɪs'ti:ziə/ (mass noun): insensitivity to pain induced by administration of gases or injection of drugs before a surgical operation

**anaesthetic** (US anesthetic) /,anɪs'θetɪk/ (noun, adjective): a drug that induces insensitivity to pain; inducing or relating to insensitivity to pain

**Recovery Room:** observation area next to the Operating Theatre where post-operative patients are monitored until they recover from anaesthesia. The term is more commonly found in the UK, whereas the term PACU (Post Anaesthesia Care Unit) may be more common elsewhere, e.g. Australia

**ODPs (Operating Department Practitioners):** technicians who support operating staff during surgery.

**PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia):** computerised pump which is attached to a patient's IV line. The patient is able to press a button to release a dose of pain relief whenever it is needed. The doses are programmed into the pump so that patients are unable to deliver more than the safe dose of medication.

## Part 2: reading

Have students work individually to read the text and complete the definitions using words from the text. Then ask students to compare their ideas with a partner.

Go through the answers as a class.

### Answers

1.anaesthetic 2.general anaesthetic 3.local anaesthetic 4. spinal anaesthetic 5.IV fluids  
6.dressing 7.drain 8.urinary catheter 9.in situ 10.PCA

## Part 3: vocabulary

Have students work individually to write the terms below the pictures.

Go through the answers as a class.

### Answers

1.digital monitor 2.drain 3.urinary catheter 4.PCA 5.IV fluids 6.dressing

## Extension activity

Have students work in pairs to say what nurses do with the equipment in the pictures.



### **Suggested answers**

*digital monitor: check/monitor vital signs/ blood pressure, pulse*

*drain: check/monitor blood loss from the wound*

*urinary catheter: check/monitor urine output, measure urine output*

*PCA: check the patient's pain level, monitor respiratory rate (the drugs in a PCA can slow the breathing rate)*

*IV fluids: adjust the flow rate of the IV fluids, check how much IV fluid is left, check when the IV fluids are going to run out*

*dressing: check the wound for blood loss, change the dressing*

### **Part 4: writing**

Explain the activity and have students work in pairs or small groups to write a patient information leaflet for patients who are going to have an operation. They need to explain why the equipment in the list is used.

Stage the task and support students as needed. Make sure they write the leaflet using patient-friendly language, so nothing overly technical.

Lower-level groups could look at some examples before starting the activity.

You could set the activity for homework and have students read each other's leaflets in the next class. Alternatively, allow enough time in this lesson for writing and sharing their work.

**THIS LESSON PLAN COMES FROM SLC'S ENGLISH FOR  
NURSE COURSE:**

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