

**Wishaw University Hospital**  
**NHS Lanarkshire Trust**  
**Women's Services Directorate**

**Referral for Antenatal Anaesthetic Review**

Some pregnant women have medical conditions which can affect anaesthetic management. Women with coexisting conditions may benefit from anaesthetic assessment prior to delivery. In addition, early referral allows further investigation, appropriate multidisciplinary discussion and the formulation of an anaesthetic management plan.

**Anaesthetic Referral Prior to 36 Weeks Gestation (preferable type of referrals).**

Ideally women who require anaesthetic review will be identified at the booking visit. A letter of referral (paper, e-mail, Badger System, ext. 6747) should be sent to the Anaesthetic Department Secretary at Wishaw who will arrange an appointment for the patient to be seen in the antenatal anaesthetic clinic.

Details of the Estimated Date of Delivery, the name of responsible Obstetric Consultant, responsible Midwife and a detailed description of the nature of the Medical/Obstetric/Anaesthetic problems should be included in the letter.

The patient will be seen by Consultant Obstetric Anaesthetist at an appropriate Gestation age and this will depend on the reason for the referral.

Anaesthetic Review will be offered after other appropriate specialist visit e.g. cardiologist, haematologist, neurosurgeon is completed and the necessary investigation results available (e.g. CT scan, X-ray, ECG, ECHO).

Some women develop conditions which require anaesthetic review during pregnancy, but after the booking visit. Such women must also be referred as soon as identified. Referrals should be as detailed as possible.

For all midwife referrals, a letter indicating that the woman has been referred to a Consultant Anaesthetist must be sent to the appropriate Consultant Obstetrician.

### Anaesthetic Referral at or after 36 Weeks Gestation

If it becomes apparent at 36 weeks gestation or later that a woman requires anaesthetic assessment, do not refer to the anaesthetic clinic. The on-call Consultant Obstetric Anaesthetist in Wishaw Maternity, Monday to Friday, 0900-1700 on page 131 may speak and review the Patient. Still Anaesthetic Secretary at Wishaw Hospital may offer Clinic appointment as short notice; however, there are limited date and time options of the visit. A plan for anaesthetic review can then be made.

### Postnatal Anaesthetic Referral.

The referral should be sent to Wishaw Hospital Anaesthetic Secretary.

Anaesthetic complication of Regional Anaesthesia (Epidural, Spinal, Combined Spinal Epidural):

Post Dural Puncture Headache, brain/spine haemorrhage, severe paresthesia and signs of severe nerve damage or new severe back pain following regional anaesthesia.

Women with one of the above complications must be seen in the Clinic within 2 weeks to 3 months in post natal period for Anaesthetic Review.

Women with Post Dural Puncture Headache followed by Blood Patch Procedure must be seen in the Clinic within 3 months after the Blood Patch Procedure is completed. The referral will be made by community Midwife or via GP.

Women who wish to have multidisciplinary meeting and speak with Obstetric Anaesthetist, after complicated and traumatic labour, during which Anaesthetic Complications were part of.

All women referred to High Risk Antenatal Anaesthetic Clinic may be offered ultrasound scan of lumbar back for assessment of Spinal and Epidural Anaesthesia. There are limited diagnostic options of ultrasound of lumbar back area and MRI or CT scans must be completed when indicated.

### **Indications for anaesthetic referral.**

#### **1/. Anticipated anaesthesia related problems:**

- History of difficult / failed intubation,
  - Anticipated difficult airways, previous oral or facial surgery affecting mouth opening or neck movement, oral, neck, facial swelling (including enlarged thyroid), limited neck movement or mouth opening
- Anaphylaxis
- Suxamethonium apnoea
- Malignant Hyperthermia
- Porphyria
- Previous traumatic anaesthetic experience
- Complications after neuraxial blockade (Spinal/Epidural), including previous failed Spinal or Epidural
- Spine problems, e.g. congenital abnormalities, previous operations, trauma, scoliosis, spina bifida etc.
- Severe needle phobia (the most appropriate referral would be via their GP for psychological therapy).
- Women who refuse blood transfusion

#### **2/. Cardiovascular Disease**

Cardiology diagnosis should have been made before referral to an anaesthetist. Where patients have a past medical history of cardiac disease,

documentation should be available in the maternity notes and the patient's cardiologist should have been made aware of the pregnancy.

- Congenital heart disease, surgically corrected or uncorrected, Structural heart defects
- Acquired heart disease: valvular lesions, ischemic heart disease (angina, previous myocardial infarction: STEMI or Non STEMI)
- Cardiomyopathy
- Heart Arrhythmias: congenital or acquired (e.g. supra ventricular tachycardia, complete AV-block, Prolonged Q-T Syndrome, WPW Syndrome)
- Diseases of the aorta (e.g. Marfan's Syndrome)

### **3/. Haematological Disease**

- History of thromboembolism before or during pregnancy
- Hypercoagulability with anticoagulation therapy during pregnancy (e.g. Protein S/C/ATIII deficiency)
- Congenital Coagulopathies (e.g. von Willebrand disease)
- Thrombocytopenic Coagulopathies
- Haemoglobinopathy (e.g. Thalassaemia, Sickle-Cell disease)

Woman with Stable and Constant Thrombocytopenia (low Platelets level at the similar level observed for the last 4 months, prior to the anaesthetic referral, checked every 2 weeks) observed during her pregnancy may be referred after 36 gestation for anaesthetic review.

### **4/. Respiratory Disease**

- Severe obstructive/ restrictive lung disease (e.g. severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, COPD),

which require special care during pregnancy and childbirth, causing impairment of daily activities.

. any active treatment or chemotherapy, which combined with high concentrated Oxygen, may be dangerous or cause internal organs complications.

## **5/. Neurological Disorders**

- Conditions which may interfere with neuroaxial (Spinal/Epidural) anaesthesia and analgesia
- Neuromuscular disease which may affect breathing (Myasthenia gravis, Muscular dystrophy, myotonic dystrophy)
- Other intracranial pathologies (e.g. AV-malformations, Neoplasm/Tumours) surgically corrected or not.
- Previous history of stroke or intracranial bleeding
- . Multiple sclerosis
- . Benign intracranial hypertension
- . Hydrocephalus
- . Persisting neurological symptoms after previous delivery

## **6/. BMI**

Any woman with high BMI at booking, BMI 45 or more, should be referred.

## **7/. Renal Disease**

- Impaired renal function/ regular dialysis
- Renal Transplant

## **8/. Endocrinological Disorders**

- Acromegaly, Addison's disease and similar disorders
- Poorly controlled or uncontrolled Diabetes mellitus
- Pheochromocytoma

## **9/. Autoimmune Disorders**

- Systemic Lupus erythematosus
- Systemic Sclerosis (Scleroderma)

## **10/. Post natal complications of Regional Anaesthesia**

Women with Post Dural Puncture Headache, brain/spine haemorrhage, severe parasthesia and signs of severe nerve damage, new severe back pain other than previous pain prior to Regional Anaesthesia procedure must be seen in the Clinic within 2 weeks to 3 months in post natal period for Anaesthetic Review.

Women with Post Puncture Headache followed by Blood Patch Procedure must be seen in the Clinic within 3 months after the Blood Patch Procedure is completed.

**Special circumstances: pandemic/epidemic situation and national advice for isolation at home, severe immunodeficiency disorders, other special and extraordinary personal circumstances.**

Pt may be advised to agree for Anaesthetic consultation/review/conversation over the phone, videoconference device/tool to avoid unnecessary exposure or infection risk.

These Patients will be identified by our Anaesthetic Team, ask for permission to follow the safe link and watch prepared short film/presentation regarding essential Obstetric Anaesthesia/Analgesia explanations.

A member of Wishaw Hospital Obstetric Anaesthetic Team, Obstetric Anaesthetist, will start talk, which usually takes up to 30 minutes. The Pt is required to stay in a calm place, which allows understandable conversation and in network accessible spot.

Some of the Patients still will be requested to be reviewed by Anaesthetist at Wishaw Hospital.

**Reviewed by:** Dr M Dalidowski  
**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
**Ratified by:** Clinical Effectiveness Maternity Sub Group  
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