

**CLINICAL DIRECTORS:**

**P B Andrew** BVSc Cert AVP MRCVS

**C J Phillips** MA Vet MB CertAVP (ESO) MRCVS

**M D Tabachnik** BSc BVMS Cert EP PG Cert (VBM) MRCVS

**H E Worth** BVMS DBR MRCVS

**H K Edwards** BVMS CertAVP (Cattle) MRCVS



Website: [www.wmvets.co.uk](http://www.wmvets.co.uk)  
Email: [partners@wmvets.co.uk](mailto:partners@wmvets.co.uk)

## General Anaesthesia at Wright and Morten.

Anaesthesia is routinely and regularly performed in the clinic. We have a purpose built theatre suite with two induction and recovery rooms.

Many procedures can be performed with the horse standing, under sedation, using local anaesthetic at the site of intervention. This is used for dental extractions, some abdominal operations such as ovary removal and certain orthopaedic surgeries. For other surgeries a general anaesthetic is necessary for patient safety.

General anaesthetic (GA) involves the use of an injectable drug and inhaled gas, to make the horse unconscious. This allows us to position the horse safely and perform more detailed procedures.

The case vet will discuss the most appropriate choice of anaesthesia with you. Every horse is an individual, what can be performed conscious in one patient may be quite different for another.



### **The anaesthesia timeline.**

We request patients to arrive the day before routine surgery as this reduces stress and improves anaesthesia recovery. The horse is weighed on our weighbridge for accurate drug dosing and settled in the internal stables. We ask you to wash the horse at home but we may further prepare the surgical site by clipping and cleaning.

The horse is given a measured feed to enable the stomach to empty overnight. Limiting food intake overnight reduces the volume in the guts and that eases pressure on the major blood vessels and organs during anaesthesia.

**MACCLESFIELD VETERINARY HOSPITAL**  
38 Cumberland Street  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK10 1BZ  
Tel: 01625 501500  
Fax: 01625 612240

**CONGLETON BRANCH**  
18 Moody Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire CW12 4AP  
Tel: 01260 273222

**WILMSLOW BRANCH**  
19 Hawthorn Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5DD  
Tel: 01625 524422

**FARM CENTRE**  
The Barn - Holly Tree Farm  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Lower Withington  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK11 9DT  
Tel: 01477 571000

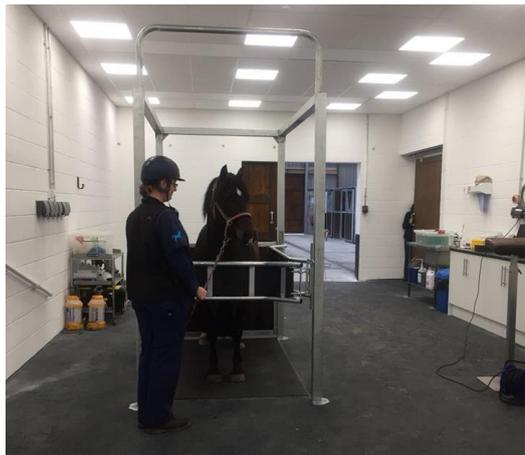
**WHALEY BRIDGE**  
Block B  
Ringstones Industrial Estate  
Whaley Bridge  
High Peak  
Derbyshire SK23 7PD  
Tel: 01663 732564

**EQUINE CENTRE**  
Somersford Park  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Somersford  
Cheshire CW12 4SW  
Tel: 01260 280800

Wright & Morten Veterinary Surgeons is a trading name of Independent Vetcare Ltd  
Registered in England No. 07746795 VAT No. 115-1416-58  
Registered Office: The Chocolate Factory, Keynsham, BS31 2AU Tel: 01225 481520

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for credit-related regulated activities under reference number FRN738010

The theatre team ensure all machines are checked and the operating bed set up.



The morning of surgery, a pre-anaesthetic check is performed by a member of the anaesthesia team. A catheter is placed in the jugular vein in the neck for drug and fluid administration. Analgesia (pain relief) is administered, both non-steroidal anti-inflammatories like bute, and morphine type agents may be used. Local anaesthetic injections may be used for lower limb surgery and epidurals for upper limb work. Antibiotics are administered if appropriate.

An initial premedication using acepromazine (ACP) is given and the horse left to relax whilst final full pre-anaesthetic theatre checks are carried out.

The horse is led into the knock down box which is lined in specialist non-slip impact absorbing material. They are given the final part of the pre-medication, and once fully sedated, the anaesthetic drugs of ketamine and valium are given. 3-4 members of the team assist the horse to the floor and an endotracheal (ET tube) is put in through the mouth for administration of gas. The horse is winched to the theatre. Attention is paid to correct positioning on the padded hydraulic bed. The anaesthetic gas is connected up to the ET tube, and monitoring equipment including ECG and gas level measurements are applied. We use direct arterial blood pressure monitoring as horses are vulnerable to low blood pressure under anaesthesia which can increase complications. The horses are maintained on intravenous fluid to which other drugs can be added as required.



Surgery is carried out whilst the horse is closely monitored by one of the veterinary surgeon anaesthetists and veterinary nurses. At the end of surgery the horse is winched to the recovery box and may be further sedated to allow the levels of gas anaesthetic in the body to reduce before they attempt to stand. Oxygen supplementation is continued by nasal tubes and the ET tube removed once the swallowing reflex has returned. Horses usually stand between 20 and 45 minutes after the end of anaesthesia.



☐ **MACCLESFIELD VETERINARY HOSPITAL**  
38 Cumberland Street  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK10 1BZ  
Tel: 01625 501500  
Fax: 01625 612240

☐ **CONGLETON BRANCH**  
18 Moody Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire CW12 4AP  
Tel: 01260 273222

☐ **WILMSLOW BRANCH**  
19 Hawthorn Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5DD  
Tel: 01625 524422

☐ **FARM CENTRE**  
The Barn - Holly Tree Farm  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Lower Withington  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK11 9DT  
Tel: 01477 571000

☐ **WHALEY BRIDGE**  
Block B  
Ringstones Industrial Estate  
Whaley Bridge  
High Peak  
Derbyshire SK23 7PD  
Tel: 01663 732564

☐ **EQUINE CENTRE**  
Somford Park  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Somford  
Cheshire CW12 4SW  
Tel: 01260 280800

Around an hour later they are usually confident and sufficiently coordinated to return to the stable. A careful post-operative feeding and management routine is adhered to including regular monitoring for pain and any developing complications. Our inpatient nurses keep a very close eye on feeding and bowel movements and this is continued on into the evening by the duty veterinary surgeon. The case vet will contact you once we are happy the horse is settled back in the stable, this may be some hours after the start of surgery but we would contact you straight away if there were any problems. We don't advise visits on the day of surgery as this can be unsettling for the horse and they are much brighter and ready for visitors the next day!



We will have given you a guide as to when the horse will be discharged from the hospital but this will be evaluated each day and communicated to you.

Whilst anaesthesia can be a worrying time for horse owners, we would only advise surgery where the benefits of a procedure far outweighed any possible risks. Many of the staff who own horses have had surgery on them and fully understand the decision making process.

Serious complications are uncommon but there can occasionally be injuries in the induction and recovery process. Anaesthetic drugs do have effects on organs especially the brain and heart but the combinations we use are the safest available. The potential for lower blood pressure and lying on their muscles for a period of time can increase risk of muscle cramps (myopathy). The bowel activity can be reduced following anaesthesia and post-operative colic can occur. The vast majority of these complications are managed and treated and the overall surgical success is not affected.

Losing a horse is devastating but NOT common, figures in recent studies suggest an overall mortality rate of 0.5-1% but the majority of our shorter routine surgeries would have a risk far lower than this. We are proud of our anaesthetists who have all been qualified many years and combine their experience with regular and current continued professional education.

If you have any questions about the choice of anaesthesia please contact your case vet or ask any member of the clinical team.

☐ **MACCLESFIELD VETERINARY HOSPITAL**  
38 Cumberland Street  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK10 1BZ  
Tel: 01625 501500  
Fax: 01625 612240

☐ **CONGLETON BRANCH**  
18 Moody Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire CW12 4AP  
Tel: 01260 273222

☐ **WILMSLOW BRANCH**  
19 Hawthorn Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5DD  
Tel: 01625 524422

☐ **FARM CENTRE**  
The Barn - Holly Tree Farm  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Lower Withington  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK11 9DT  
Tel: 01477 571000

☐ **WHALEY BRIDGE**  
Block B  
Ringstones Industrial Estate  
Whaley Bridge  
High Peak  
Derbyshire SK23 7PD  
Tel: 01663 732564

☐ **EQUINE CENTRE**  
Somford Park  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Somford  
Cheshire CW12 4SW  
Tel: 01260 280800

Wright & Morten Veterinary Surgeons is a trading name of Independent Vetcare Ltd  
Registered in England No. 07746795 VAT No. 115-1416-58  
Registered Office: The Chocolate Factory, Keynsham, BS31 2AU Tel: 01225 481520

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for credit-related regulated activities under reference number FRN738010

If possible please complete this checklist prior to admission:

Shoe removal - for protection of the horses own legs and reducing damage to the specialist flooring  
A good groom, the horse should be CLEAN, in the summer ideally washed, but in winter a thorough brush is fine.

Bring appropriate CLEAN rugs - normal stable rugs but also a fleece/cooler such as a thermatex is ideal for the post op period as your horse may be sweaty immediately after surgery. We have spare rugs if you don't have these.

Any special supplements or feeds or on going medication

Ideally arrive between 9am and 2pm the day before surgery so we can admit your horse and get them settled and you have opportunity to ask any final questions. If you are dropping your horse off at a weekend a member of staff will be happy to meet you between 4pm and 5pm to go through the admission paperwork with you.

It is useful to inform the insurance company the horse is going to have a GA as soon as possible, as prior permission may be required or further reports required from the case vet.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact the office on 01260 280800 or your case vet.



**MACCLESFIELD  
VETERINARY  
HOSPITAL**  
38 Cumberland Street  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK10 1BZ  
Tel: 01625 501500  
Fax: 01625 612240

**CONGLETON  
BRANCH**  
18 Moody Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire CW12 4AP  
Tel: 01260 273222

**WILMSLOW BRANCH**  
19 Hawthorn Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5DD  
Tel: 01625 524422

**FARM CENTRE**  
The Barn - Holly Tree Farm  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Lower Withington  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire SK11 9DT  
Tel: 01477 571000

**WHALEY BRIDGE**  
Block B  
Ringstones Industrial Estate  
Whaley Bridge  
High Peak  
Derbyshire SK23 7PD  
Tel: 01663 732564

**EQUINE CENTRE**  
Somerford Park  
Holmes Chapel Road  
Somerford  
Cheshire CW12 4SW  
Tel: 01260 280800

Wright & Morten Veterinary Surgeons is a trading name of Independent Vetcare Ltd  
Registered in England No. 07746795 VAT No. 115-1416-58  
Registered Office: The Chocolate Factory, Keynsham, BS31 2AU Tel: 01225 481520

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for credit-related regulated activities under reference number FRN738010