

Anesthesia

PATIENT EDUCATION

This information applies to a number of surgeries or procedures a patient may have. The word "surgery" is used throughout as a general term that covers both surgeries and procedures.

WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE SURGERY

Prior to your surgical procedure, you will undergo a preoperative evaluation. This evaluation focuses on your health and choosing an anesthetic plan that is right for you and your surgery. The anesthetic plan will be discussed with you before your surgery.

This can include:

- A review of your medical history, including medications you are taking and any allergies you may have
- A physical examination
- Blood and lab tests
- EKGs or X-rays

In order to manage surgical pain effectively, you may be given a nerve block before your surgery at the request of your surgeon. This is known as a preoperative nerve block.

A preoperative nerve block may be performed by an anesthesiologist who may be different than the one who will care for you during your surgery.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING SURGERY

During surgery, you will be provided with comprehensive anesthesia care, based on both the anesthetic plan and the type of surgery you are having. It is the responsibility of the anesthesiologist to manage your pain and comfort throughout the surgery.

This can include:

- Administration and regulation of the anesthetic to ensure your pain is completely controlled during your surgery
- Management of your body functions during the surgery, such as heart rate and blood pressure

Depending upon the type of procedure you are having, you may be in an unconscious state during the procedure, have a sedative administered, or remain awake.



WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

After your surgery you will be taken to recovery for monitoring.

The recovery nurse will check your activity level, breathing, circulation and level of consciousness. The anesthesiologist is available to help control any postoperative pain and/or nausea.

TYPES OF ANESTHESIA

Depending on the type of surgery, you will have one or more of the following anesthesia types:

- General anesthesia
- Monitored anesthesia care (MAC)
- Regional anesthesia

See reverse side for additional information regarding the various anesthesia types and associated risks.



IMPORTANT

You're required to view the short educational video related to this document at least 48 hours before your surgery or procedure. You will then be asked to acknowledge that you have viewed the video in its entirety.

Scan the code above with your smart phone or tablet to view this document and related educational video(s). You may also access them at EisenhowerHealth.org/anesthesia



GENERAL ANESTHESIA

General anesthesia is most commonly used for surgery involving the abdomen, chest, or head and neck. There are two main types of general anesthesia. Intravenous anesthesia is given through an IV line. Inhaled gas anesthesia is given through a mask or a breathing tube. The type used depends on the surgery.

The anesthesiologist puts you into a state of deep sleep (temporarily unconscious) to keep you from feeling pain during surgery. Because you are under general anesthesia, you feel no pain and remember nothing of the surgery.

During the procedure, the anesthesiologist is continuously present and monitors your vital signs to make sure they are normal and steady.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS OF GENERAL ANESTHESIA

The risks and complications of anesthesia depend on your overall health.

The most common side effects of general anesthesia include:

- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Hoarseness
- Dizziness
- There is a small risk that damage to your teeth can occur when placing the breathing tube, so it is important to let the anesthesiologist know if you have any loose teeth or dentures.

Rare but severe risks or complications of general anesthesia include the following:

- Allergic reaction
- Aspiration
- Awareness and pain during procedure
- Infection
- Breathing problems
- Injury to arteries, veins, nerves, voice, skin or vital organs
- Irregular heartbeat
- Cardiac arrest
- Loss of limb or life

Effects of general anesthesia may last up to 24 to 48 hours after surgery and you should therefore refrain from major decision making, signing important documents and performing activities that require skill, such as driving a vehicle and athletic events.

MONITORED ANESTHESIA CARE (MAC)

MAC is also known as mild or moderate sedation. An anesthesiologist gives you medications (sedatives) to relax you through intravenous (IV) line. A local anesthetic may also be injected into the skin and tissue around the surgical site to decrease sensation and to keep you from feeling pain during surgery. You may feel drowsy during surgery with MAC. The effects of MAC, when combined with regional anesthesia, may last eight to 24 hours or more after the procedure, depending on the type and amount of anesthesia used. A significant benefit of MAC over general anesthesia is that it does not require insertion of a breathing tube and the risks associated with breathing tubes.

RISKS AND POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF MAC

MAC has some risks, these include the following:

- Breathing problems
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Allergic reaction (rare)

REGIONAL ANESTHESIA

The anesthesiologist blocks sensation in a specific area of your body by injecting anesthetic medication near the major nerves surrounding the area of surgery to keep you comfortable and control your pain. This type of anesthesia is often used for surgery on the arms, legs and abdomen. It's also used during childbirth.

Peripheral nerve blocks do not put you to sleep, but are commonly used along with MAC or with general anesthesia. The decreased sensation effect may last for several hours after a surgical procedure, depending on the type and amount of anesthesia used. Your anesthesiologist may use one of the following methods of regional anesthesia:

- **Nerve block** – Local anesthesia is injected near the major nerves surrounding the area of surgery
- **Spinal** – Local anesthesia is injected directly into the fluid surrounding the spinal cord in the back
- **Epidural** – Local anesthesia is injected in the epidural space

Both spinal and epidural anesthesia provide pain relief from chest down to the legs.

Risks of spinal and epidural anesthesia include:

- Difficulty urinating
- Headache
- Drop in heart rate and blood pressure.
- Short or long term weakness from nerve damage (rare)

For information on peripheral nerve blocks, see [handout](#) and watch the educational video [Anesthesia with Peripheral Nerve Blocks](#) available at EisenhowerHealth.org/anesthesia