

YOUR ANESTHESIA CARE

Guiding you through surgery safely and comfortably is our priority. Your anesthesia care will be either personally provided by one of our physician anesthesiologists (M.D./D.O.), or by a care team including a physician anesthesiologist and a nurse anesthetist (CRNA). Although you may have received a phone call or had a preoperative anesthesia appointment, you will also meet your physician anesthesiologist prior to surgery.

Options for Your Anesthesia

Your anesthesiologist will discuss available options for your anesthesia, based on your medical condition, the type of surgery you are having, and what is safest for you. Often, there is only one “best” option. In some cases, your anesthesia team may combine different types of anesthesia, described below, to provide you the best anesthetic care.

General Anesthesia makes you completely unaware of your surroundings and the pain of surgery. It may include inhaled and injected medicines. It usually requires insertion of a breathing tube or an airway device to ensure that you breathe safely during surgery.

Regional Anesthesia involves using numbing medicines (local anesthetics) to numb or “block” sensation where you are having surgery. It is particularly well-suited for surgery involving an arm or leg, but can also help in surgery of the chest or abdomen. Regional anesthesia is usually combined with either sedation or general anesthesia.

Sedation involves the use of injected medicines that relax you and make you less aware. Sedation is frequently used for short procedures such as endoscopies (colonoscopy, upper GI endoscopy).

What are the Risks?

All surgery and anesthesia involve some degree of risk. The type of surgery and your medical condition are important factors that determine your level of risk. Your anesthesiologist carefully considers these risks when tailoring your anesthetic plan. Your anesthesia care team will continually monitor you while you are under anesthesia, to ensure that you are safe and that you receive appropriate doses of anesthetics.

What are common side effects?

As with all medicines, anesthetics may have side effects. Common side effects of **general anesthesia** include sleepiness, grogginess, nausea (“sick stomach”) or vomiting, and sore throat from airway devices. Nausea can be reduced in many cases by anti-nausea medicines that you will receive during and after surgery. If you have a past history of nausea after surgery, please tell your anesthesia providers, and they will tailor your care to minimize it.

Common side effects of **regional anesthesia** include temporary numbness and weakness in the part of your body that has received the numbing medicine. This may feel strange, but it is a sign that the anesthesia is working, and will help provide post-surgery pain relief! Your sense of hot and cold in the numbed area is also temporarily altered, so you must be careful not to leave ice packs or heating pads on that area for long periods of time while the numbness persists. As the numbness wears off, it is normal to feel a “pins and needles” sensation. You may go home with a long-acting nerve block to help with pain relief for several days after surgery; if so, you will receive special instructions about it.

We wish you well, and we look forward to taking care of you!