

## YOUR CHILD'S ANESTHESIA CARE

Guiding your child through surgery safely and comfortably is our priority. Your child's anesthesia care will be personally provided by one of our physicians. Although you may have received a phone call or had a preoperative anesthesia appointment, you will also meet your child's anesthesiologist prior to surgery.

### **Options for Your Child's Anesthesia**

Your anesthesiologist will discuss available options for your child's anesthesia, based on their age, medical condition, the type of surgery, and what is safest. Frequently, there is only one "best" option. In some cases, your anesthesiologist may combine different types of anesthesia, described below, to provide your child the best anesthetic care.

**General Anesthesia** makes your child completely unaware of their surroundings and the pain of surgery. For newborns, infants, and children up to the pre-teens, this commonly involves letting them breathe themselves to sleep (a "mask induction"), usually after receiving medications that will relax them and minimize anxiety. After they are asleep, they will usually have an IV placed and a breathing tube or airway inserted to protect their breathing during surgery. Older children and teens frequently have an IV placed before surgery, which allows for a smooth, easy start of anesthesia with IV medicines.

**Regional Anesthesia** involves using numbing medicines (local anesthetics) that numb or "block" sensation at the site of surgery. It is particularly well-suited for cases involving arms or legs, but can also help in urology cases and surgery of the chest or abdomen. Regional anesthesia is usually combined with general anesthesia for children, and is frequently performed after your child is asleep.

### **What are the Risks to Your Child?**

All surgery and anesthesia involve some degree of risk. The type of surgery and your child's medical condition are important factors that determine their level of risk. Your anesthesiologist carefully considers these risks when tailoring and recommending their anesthetic plan. He or she will continually monitor your child while they are under anesthesia to ensure that your child is safe and that they receive appropriate doses of anesthetics.

### **What are Common Side Effects?**

As with all medicines, anesthetics have side effects. Common side effects of **general anesthesia** in children may include sleepiness, irritability/fussiness, nausea ("sick stomach") or vomiting, and a sore throat from airway devices. Nausea can be reduced in many cases by anti-nausea medicines that your child will receive during and after surgery. If your child has a history of nausea after surgery, car sickness, or has a close relative with a history of nausea after surgery, please tell your anesthesiologist so they can tailor their care to minimize it.

Common side effects of **regional anesthesia** may include temporary numbness and weakness in the part of your child's body that has been "blocked." This may feel strange to them, but it is a sign that the block is working, and will help provide post-surgery pain relief! Because one's sense of hot and cold in the numbed area is also temporarily changed, you must be careful not to leave ice packs or heating pads on that area for long periods of time. As the numbness wears off, it is normal for children to feel a "pins and needles" sensation. If your child goes home with a long-acting nerve block to help with pain relief, you will receive special instructions about it.

We wish you all well, and we look forward to taking care of your child soon!