

ANESTHESIA PATIENT EDUCATION

The purpose of this document is to provide education on anesthesia. This material serves as a supplement to the discussion you will have with your anesthesia provider.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ANESTHESIA

Anesthesia is a medical service that:

1. Administers medications to reduce pain or stress during surgery or other procedures.
2. Manages the body's response to surgery, pain and stress, as well as to the anesthetic drugs themselves.

The patient is monitored to guide the administration of anesthesia and support breathing, circulation, and other vital body functions.

TYPES OF ANESTHESIA

General Anesthesia: This is the most common type of anesthesia. Intravenous (IV) and inhalation (gases) medications produce unconsciousness and pain relief. A safe airway is maintained during surgery through a mask on the face, a laryngeal mask above the larynx (voice box), or a tube in the trachea (windpipe).

Regional Anesthesia: This is used for some operations and/or to give additional pain relief after surgery. A region of the body is numbed by injections of local anesthetic drugs and other medications. Drugs may be injected into the spinal fluid (spinal block), epidural space next to spinal space (epidural block), or near major nerves (nerve block) to numb or reduce sensation. Sedation or general anesthesia is often given in addition for comfort and sleep.

Monitored Anesthesia Care (MAC): This may be used if a general or regional anesthesia is not necessary. Sedative drugs, also known as IV sedation, may be given to help you relax or sleep lightly. Your vital signs are carefully monitored and treated during the procedure. Local anesthetics may be injected by the surgeon to control your pain. MAC also may result in you having no memory of your procedure.

SIDE EFFECTS, RISKS, AND COMPLICATIONS

Many factors affect anesthesia risk. These include the choice of anesthesia, your surgical illness, medical conditions, and surgical procedure. The information is not meant to scare or alarm you; it is simply an effort to make you better informed. In general, the following **may** occur:

- **Common Side Effects:**

Nausea or vomiting; sore throat; muscle, back or headaches; temporary difficulty urinating; temporary difficulty with memory and thinking, especially in elderly patients.

- **Uncommon Complications:**

Allergic or adverse drug reactions; aspiration of vomit; breathing difficulty requiring artificial ventilation or other treatment; bruised or swollen lips; chipped or broken teeth; collapsed lung; eye injury; heart attack; infection; injury to veins or arteries; injury to vocal cords; nerve injury causing numbness, pain, weakness, paralysis, or loss of bladder or bowel function; nosebleed; pneumonia; recall of surgery; seizure; stroke; transfusion reaction; unplanned admission to hospital or Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Teeth and dental work chipped or broken are a risk of general anesthesia and are not compensated by the hospital or Anesthesiology Department.

- **Rare Complications:**

Blindness, brain damage, cardiac arrest, coma, death, fetal injury or death.



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