

Anesthesia - Frequently Asked Questions

The Anesthesia Team of First Physicians Group includes highly trained, board certified, physician Anesthesiologists and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists who are dedicated to providing the highest quality care to patients at Sarasota Memorial Health Care System. Our multidisciplinary team works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure the best outcomes for our patients.

What is anesthesia?

Anesthesia is a service provided by qualified physicians and anesthesiologist practicing in a care team model to reduce pain, anxiety, and consciousness during a procedure. This can be accomplished with a variety of different drug types to facilitate the best patient experience possible

What are the different types of anesthesia?

There are four types:

- ▶ General anesthesia, used for major operations, creates a state of total relaxation.
- ▶ Sedation, often used for minimally invasive surgery, blocks pain and causes sleepiness, but doesn't put you to sleep.
- ▶ Regional anesthesia, such as an epidural or a nerve block, numbs a large part of the body while you remain awake. Doctors often use regional anesthesia with sedation or general anesthesia.
- ▶ Local anesthesia numbs just a small area of your body for minor procedures, such as getting stitches or having a mole removed.

How do doctors give you anesthesia?

The most common method is through an IV catheter with medications to induce anesthesia. Inhaled anesthetics commonly maintain anesthesia. There are a few other forms of anesthesia that are less common and would be discussed if needed.

How is general anesthesia administered?

For adults and older children, general anesthesia is given through an intravenous (IV) line.

Young children can inhale anesthesia through a mask or tube, and receive an IV after becoming unconscious.

How long does it take for anesthesia to take effect?

General anesthesia usually puts you to sleep in less than 30 seconds.

Do I get to decide which anesthesia I want?

It depends on the type of surgery, but it's a discussion between you, the surgeon and anesthesiologist.

To make the best decision, your doctors will want to know your:

- ▶ Medical history, including any reactions to previous anesthesia
- ▶ Current medications or over-the-counter medicine
- ▶ Known allergies

How dangerous is general anesthesia?

Better monitoring technology and improved anesthetic drugs make general anesthesia safe for healthy patients.

You'll have an increased risk from surgery and anesthesia if you have significant health conditions, such as heart or kidney problems. Your surgeon and anesthesia team will perform a thorough medical history and physical exam before surgery to assess your risk.

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Why do I have to not eat before surgery?

It reduces the risk of aspiration of stomach contents into your airway during induction, maintenance, and emergence from anesthesia. Your safety and health is of vital importance to your providers. Aspiration can lead to increased morbidity during your procedure.

What are the side effects of anesthesia?

After having anesthesia, you might experience:

- ▶ Grogginess
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Sore throat

How does general anesthesia affect my brain and body?

General anesthesia prevents your body from moving while you're unconscious. Still, it's possible for your body to move a little. Since even small movements can be dangerous for some surgeries, in those cases, you'll also get a muscle relaxer.

Could I have an allergic reaction to anesthesia?

Sometimes people have an allergic reaction to anesthetic drugs. Symptoms are similar to any other allergic reaction. If you've experienced a reaction before, let your anesthesiologist know.

Do you stop breathing during general anesthesia?

No. After you're unconscious, your anesthesiologist places a breathing tube in your mouth and nose to make sure you maintain proper breathing during the procedure.

Does the anesthesiologist stay with me the whole time I'm unconscious?

Yes. Your anesthesiologist directs the anesthesia team of anesthesiology nurses. A member of the anesthesia team will stay by your side to monitor your vital signs and breathing throughout the operation. This also ensures you're consistently receiving the right dose of anesthesia. The anesthesiologist will frequently check on you during your care.

How long does anesthesia last?

The timeline varies:

- ▶ IV pain medication can help for up to 8 hours
- ▶ A nerve block can help manage pain for 12-24 hours
- ▶ Spinal blocks can alleviate pain for 24-48 hours
- ▶ Epidurals are the longest-lasting, easing pain for up to 4-5 days

How long does it take to recover from anesthesia?

It depends on the type of surgery you've had and your individual situation.

What if I feel pain after the anesthesia wears off?

Your anesthesiologist can help with pain management after the initial anesthesia wears off.

Will an anesthesiologist talk to me and/or my family about anesthesia after surgery?

You will be provided with education and reminders about anesthesia prior to leaving the post anesthesia recovery units.

