

Patient Information on Anesthesia



**ANESTHESIA SERVICES
ARE NEEDED** so your doctor can perform a planned operation or procedure. The anesthesia providers of the Department of Health Services would like to provide you with information on the anesthesia services that you will require.

BENEFITS OF ANESTHESIA

The benefits of receiving anesthesia include control of pain, decreased nervousness, maintenance of stable vital signs, and unconsciousness during the operation when under general anesthesia.

TYPES OF ANESTHESIA

There are different types of anesthesia and you may require one or more of the following:

Procedural Sedation

Involves the use of medications during a procedure to relieve anxiety or pain (analgesia).



Regional Anesthesia

Involves the injection of anesthetic medications near major nerves (example, spinal, epidural, nerve block), which will temporarily numb or cause you to lose pain sensation in certain areas of your body.



General Anesthesia

Involves administration of anesthetic medications through your vein and inhalation of anesthetic gas that will make you unconscious.



RISKS OF ANESTHESIA

There are recognized risks of receiving anesthesia and they vary depending on the type of anesthesia you are going to receive. Some of the common ones are headache, backache, and nausea. The anesthesia providers take special precautions and monitor you carefully to prevent the following rare complications or side effects: damage or loss of teeth, infection, bleeding, drug reactions, blood clots, and loss of sensation or limb function. Ask your anesthesia provider for more information.

ALTERNATIVES

There are alternatives to sedation, analgesia or anesthesia. You may choose to undergo the planned procedure without intravenous or regional anesthesia or analgesia (for example, local anesthesia alone if possible). You can also talk to your physician to re-evaluate the need for the planned operation or procedure.

An anesthesia provider can be

- (a) an Anesthesiologist – a physician who specializes in Anesthesia Medicine,
- (b) a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) – a nurse who received a special training in anesthesia, and
- (c) an Anesthesia Resident – a physician who is in an approved Anesthesiology Residency Program. The CRNA and Resident are under the supervision of the Anesthesiologist.

YOUR OBLIGATIONS

The success of anesthesia is a joint effort between you and your anesthesia provider. Understand that you have obligations when receiving anesthesia.

Before receiving anesthesia

- You must have a completely empty stomach. Do not eat or drink anything as instructed for at least 8 hours prior to receiving anesthesia. This prevents you from vomiting any food/ fluid which may accidentally go to your lungs while under anesthesia.

It is your responsibility to tell the anesthesia provider if you ate food or drank fluids especially alcohol prior the administration of sedation, analgesia, or anesthetic medications.

- Inform the anesthesia provider if you are pregnant or suspect being pregnant.
- Inform the anesthesia provider if you or a family member had a problem with anesthesia in the past.
- Inform the anesthesia provider if you use herbal medications or supplements. Some herbal medication may cause increase bleeding or increase your blood pressure.
- Ask your doctor or anesthesia provider whether or not you should take your usual medications.
- Make arrangements for someone to care for your small children before and after your operation or procedure.
- Make arrangements for somebody to take you home if you are not going to be admitted in the hospital after the operation or procedure.

After receiving anesthesia

- Anesthetic medications can cause prolonged drowsiness. A responsible adult must be available to drive you home and accompany you for several hours until you recover sufficiently from the anesthetic medications.
- Remain quietly at home for the day and rest.
- Take liquids first and slowly progress to a light meal.
- Your judgment will be impaired during your recovery from anesthesia.

DO NOT:

- drive for at least 24 hours
- operate machinery or devices for at least 24 hours
- make important decisions (such as signing important documents, etc.) for the day
- drink alcohol for at least 24 hours
- take medications (such as sleeping pills) while recovering from anesthesia unless prescribed or discussed with your doctor

You have the right to receive all the information you desire concerning anesthesia and have had a chance to ask questions before giving and signing your consent.

Feel free to ask your anesthesia provider for any questions regarding your anesthesia management.

Contact Information:

Doctor's Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

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“Working together for successful anesthesia care”



**County of Los Angeles
Department of Health Services**

Quality Improvement Program
DHS Anesthesia Safety Group