

Anesthesia for Your Radiology Exam or Procedure

What to expect and how to prepare

This handout explains general anesthesia, a medicine given for some radiology procedures and exams that might be uncomfortable or cause stress. It explains what to expect, how to prepare, and what to do after having general anesthesia.

What is anesthesia?

General anesthesia is a medicine that puts you in a state that is like being in a deep sleep. You will not feel anything during the procedure and will not remember it after you wake up.

You will be given this medicine before and during your procedure.

How will I be given the anesthesia?

Your anesthesia provider will give you the medicine directly into your vein through an *intravenous* (IV) tube. The provider will use either IV medicines or anesthesia gases to help you stay asleep during the procedure. The provider will closely watch your heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and blood oxygen level to make sure you are handling the medicine well.

Before Your Procedure

Before your procedure, we will assess your health and review your medical history, any allergies you have, and any medicines you are taking. You may need to stop taking some medicines before your procedure.

You will need to bring a complete list of all the medicines you take. This includes medicines your doctor prescribed and other medicines that you bought without a prescription.



You will receive the anesthesia medicine through an IV line.

Be sure to tell your anesthesia provider if you:

- Have *sleep apnea* or other breathing problems (you might use a CPAP or BiPAP device while you sleep)
- Use high doses of prescription pain medicines, such as *opioids*
- Have severe heart, lung, or kidney disease
- Have had a bad reaction to anesthesia in the past
- Know that you have problems with your airway or with swallowing, or you have a limited mouth opening
- Have a mass (such as a cyst or tumor) in your neck
- Have an enlarged tongue or tonsils that cannot be seen
- Cannot lie flat on your back for about 1 hour because of back or breathing problems
- Have a hard time lying still during medical procedures
- Weigh more than 300 pounds (136 kilograms)
- Are pregnant and past 16 weeks gestation

Preparing for Your Anesthesia

- Do not eat or drink anything after 12 midnight the night before your procedure.
- If you need to take medicines, you may have small sips (less than 2 ounces) of water.

On the Day of Your Procedure

- Take all of your usual medicines on the day of your procedure unless your doctor told you not to take a certain medicine.
- Do not take vitamins and other supplements on the day you will have anesthesia. They may upset an empty stomach.
- Bring a list of **all** your medicines with you to the hospital.
- You **must** bring a responsible adult with you who can drive you home after your procedure. You cannot drive yourself home or take a bus, taxi, or shuttle by yourself.
- You also need to arrange for someone to stay with you the rest of the day after you get home from the hospital.

When You Arrive at the Hospital

- A staff member will do a health assessment.
- Your family member or friend can stay with you until it is time for your procedure to start.
- A radiologist will review the risks and benefits of the anesthesia. Please ask any questions you have. This doctor will ask you to sign a consent form after answering your questions.
- The medical team will ask you to confirm your name and birthday. This is for your safety. They will also review your anesthesia and your procedure or exam one more time.
- An IV line will be started to give you the anesthesia and other medicines, if needed.
- After you are asleep, you may have a tube inserted in your throat.

Possible Side Effects or Complications

Side effects or complications linked with having general anesthesia include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Sore throat or hoarseness
- Shivering
- Damage to your teeth
- Allergic reaction to the anesthesia medicine

These complications are very rare:

- Breathing problems
- Irregular heart rate
- Cardiac arrest (heart attack)
- Stroke

After Your Procedure or Exam

- You will stay in the recovery room for about 2 to 3 hours. Nurses will watch you until you are fully awake.
- If you had a procedure that involved a blood vessel puncture, you will then go to the 4-South unit of the hospital. Nurses will watch you for 2 to 6 hours and make sure there are no signs of bleeding.

During your recovery time:

- We will give you instructions for self-care at home.
- You may not remember much about your procedure or exam. This is normal.
- Most patients can eat and drink once they are fully awake.
- Your nurses will let you know when it is safe for you to leave. This will happen when:
 - You are awake and alert.
 - You can use the restroom and walk.
 - **Your responsible person is there to take you home.**

Important Precautions at Home

For 24 hours after your procedure, do **not**:

- Drive
- Sign important papers
- Drink alcohol
- Use machinery
- Be responsible for the care of another person

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Imaging Services:
206.598.6200