

Do's and Don'ts After Anesthesia

A Quick Guide

Do leave the healthcare facility accompanied by a responsible adult.

Do remain quietly at home for the day and rest.

Do arrange for someone to care for your small children for the day.

Do take liquids first and slowly progress to a light meal.

Do call your anesthesia professional or the facility where you were treated if you have any questions.

Don't drive a car for at least 24 hours.

Don't operate complex equipment for at least 24 hours.

Don't make any important decisions or sign any legal documents for the day.

Don't take any medications unless prescribed by or discussed with your physician.

Don't drink alcohol for at least 24 hours.

Remember

Communication and cooperation are essential to the anesthesia process. Active participation in your own care helps ensure your safety and comfort.



Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists

A Tradition of Quality Care

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are anesthesia specialists who administer more than 32 million anesthetics to patients in the United States each year. The nurse anesthesia specialty has a history of nearly 150 years.

CRNAs represent a commitment to high standards in a demanding field. The educational requirements to become a CRNA are extensive. Prior to applying for admission to a graduate program in nurse anesthesia, a candidate must have a four-year bachelor of science degree in nursing or other appropriate baccalaureate degree, a current license as a registered nurse, and a minimum of one year of acute care nursing experience. The master's degree nurse anesthesia program itself is 24-36 months, depending on university requirements. CRNAs are board certified, and mandatory continuing education is required for recertification every two years.

Nurse anesthetists provide high-quality anesthesia services combined with personal concern for the health and welfare of patients. They are happy to assist you and offer information about what to expect with your anesthesia.



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After Anesthesia



The Patient's Active Role Assists in Recovery

Anesthesia Means Freedom from Pain During Surgery

Each year, millions of people in the United States undergo some form of medical treatment requiring anesthesia. In the hands of qualified anesthesia professionals such as Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), anesthesia is a safe and effective means of alleviating pain during nearly every type of medical procedure.

All anesthesia care is provided with the highest degree of professionalism. Sensitive and sophisticated equipment monitors every important function of your body. In response to your body's reactions, your anesthesia professional will modify your anesthetic as needed.

But anesthesia care is not confined just to surgery. The process also refers to activities that take place before—and after—an anesthetic is given. Before anesthesia, a preoperative interview with your anesthesia professional supplies valuable information that helps determine your care. Open communication and cooperation are essential during the interview.



Communication and Cooperation are Necessary After Surgery as Well

The anesthesia drugs that you have been given can remain in your body for up to 24 hours after their administration. You are not completely “back to your old self” until the anesthetic has been totally eliminated.

Also during this time, it is still possible for substances entering your body to interact with the anesthetic. Be sure to check with your anesthesia professional about what medications you can take. Continue to cooperate with your care providers after surgery, and don't hesitate to ask questions.

Do's After Anesthesia



Do leave the healthcare facility accompanied by a responsible adult.

This person will ensure that you travel home safely, as well as provide immediate care at home. You should continue to have this adult with you for 24 hours after surgery.



Do remain quietly at home for the day and rest.

You need rest because you have received anesthesia and because you have undergone a surgical procedure—even one that is considered minor. If, after a day, you still do not feel recovered, you may want to continue your rest for an additional day or two. Discuss your planned return to work with your physician.



Do arrange for someone to care for your small children for the day.

Even if given instructions to play peacefully and not overtax you, children sometimes forget such directions or have trouble staying quiet for an entire day. The most predictable course of action is to leave small children and babies in the care of another responsible individual.



Do take liquids first and slowly progress to a light meal.

Heavy foods can be difficult for your system to digest, thereby increasing the chance for discomfort. For your nourishment, start by taking liquids, then eat light foods, such as broth or soup, crackers or toast, plain rice, jello, and yogurt.



Do call your anesthesia professional or the facility where you were treated if you have any questions.

These professionals are interested in your welfare and want your care to go as planned. If you have questions, or feel your recovery is not progressing to your satisfaction, call them.

Don'ts After Anesthesia



Don't drive a car for at least 24 hours.

After anesthesia, your reactions and judgment may be impaired. Such impairment makes driving a car dangerous to you and to others. It is especially important that you don't forget to make arrangements for someone else to drive you home from the healthcare facility.



Don't operate complex equipment for at least 24 hours.

The same logic that applies to driving a car applies to the operation of other equipment. This includes equipment used at home, such as a lawnmower, as well as that which is used on the job, such as a forklift.



Don't make any important decisions or sign any legal documents for the day.

The potential for impairment relates not only to physical activities, but to your mental state as well. Moreover, the anxiety that frequently accompanies important decisions is to be avoided. The day should be spent resting.



Don't take any medications unless prescribed by or discussed with your physician.

Some medications may adversely interact with anesthetic drugs or chemicals remaining in your body. Included are prescription drugs, such as sleeping pills or tranquilizers, and over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin.



Don't drink alcohol for at least 24 hours.

Alcohol is also considered a drug, meaning that an alcoholic drink has the potential to react negatively with the anesthetic in your system. This includes hard liquor, beer, and wine.

Do's & Don'ts