

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists: A Tradition of Quality Care

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are anesthesia specialists who administer approximately 65 percent of all anesthetics given to patients in the United States each year.

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's 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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*Supporting Our Members—
Protecting Our Patients*



WHAT EVERY
PATIENT
SHOULD KNOW
TO PREPARE FOR
SURGERY AND
ANESTHESIA IN A
PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE

OFFICE BASED ANESTHESIA

Office Surgery and Anesthesia: A Growing Demand

Surgery and anesthesia provided in an office setting is a safe alternative to hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs).

There are many reasons why more and more patients are choosing the office setting: access to care, lower costs, efficiency, confidentiality, and comfort with the surroundings.

Today, plastic surgeons, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, dentists, and other specialists provide surgical and other services in office settings—services that used to be available only in hospitals and ASCs. Working closely with a qualified anesthesia professional, such as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) or physician anesthesiologist, these practitioners enable their patients to safely and comfortably undergo procedures as complex as liposuction, face lifts, breast augmentation, lithotripsy, and arthroscopic knee surgery.



Is Office Anesthesia Safe?

Due to improvements in drugs, technology, anesthesia techniques, and provider education, anesthesia care is safer than it has ever been. In fact, the Institute of Medicine reported in 1999 that anesthesia is nearly 50 times safer today than it was in the early 1980s.

The same standard of anesthesia care for hospitals and ASCs also applies to office settings, regardless of whether the anesthesia professional



is a CRNA or an anesthesiologist.

The first and most comprehensive “Standards for Office Based Anesthesia Practice” were developed by

the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) and adopted in 1999. They can be viewed at:

www.aana.com/crna/prof/obstandards.asp

In addition, many states have adopted laws, regulations, or guidelines concerning office surgery and anesthesia practices as the demand for these services grows.

The Anesthetic Experience

Anesthesia allows you to be comfortable during your surgical procedure. There are several kinds of anesthesia:

- Sedation and analgesia
- Local anesthesia
- Regional anesthesia
- General anesthesia

The anesthesia option chosen for you will be based on your physical condition, reactions to medications, type of surgery, and other factors.

BEFORE ANESTHESIA

Prior to your surgery, you will talk with your anesthesia professional. In most office settings, this will be a CRNA.



This confidential interview provides your CRNA with information vital to your care. Being open and honest with your nurse anesthetist is key to the selection of the best anesthetic for you. Be sure to follow instructions closely regarding your intake of medications (including herbal), food, or liquids before anesthesia. Such substances can react negatively with anesthetic drugs. You also need to tell your CRNA about previous surgeries you have had, and whether you are or have been a smoker.

- The AANA offers a brochure titled *Before Anesthesia: Your Active Role Makes a Difference*, which contains a “Preanesthesia Questionnaire” that you can check off and give to your nurse anesthetist at your interview.

AFTER ANESTHESIA

Following surgery, you will rest in the recovery room. Office procedures are usually same-day surgeries, which means you will be able to go home the day of your surgery. When you leave, you might still feel some effects from your anesthesia. So you will need to have someone drive you home. Closely follow the directions for your home care. Some routine activities you may not be able to do for a period of time include driving, using complex equipment, and making important decisions or signing legal documents.

- The AANA offers a brochure titled *After Anesthesia: Your Active Role Assists You in Recovery*, which contains a list of things you should and should not do following anesthesia.

A free copy of the *Before Anesthesia* and *After Anesthesia* brochures can be obtained by calling 847-692-7050.

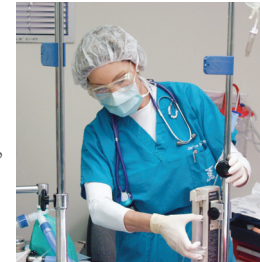
Partners in Safety—You and Your Anesthetist

How can you find out if an office truly is safe for surgery and anesthesia? By becoming a partner in safety with your CRNA. Patients who know what to look for in the office setting and what questions to ask their CRNA can better determine how safe a facility is.

On the back of this tear-off section is a checklist of questions that you should ask your anesthesia professional prior to deciding whether to undergo a procedure in an office.

SAFE-OFFICE NECESSITIES*

- Well-defined patient selection guidelines (because not everyone is a candidate for office surgery/anesthesia)
- Monitoring equipment with a backup electrical source
- Adequate numbers of well-trained staff to support the surgery and anesthesia
- Ability to treat problems and emergencies
- Plans for transferring patients to other healthcare facilities if necessary
- A sterile environment, including strictly enforced guidelines for hand washing and equipment use
- Minimal testing before surgery, including required consultations
- Routine equipment maintenance
- Clearly defined procedures for patient recovery and discharge
- Procedures for follow-up care



**Adapted from Standards for Office Based Anesthesia Practice, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, 2002.*

Office Anesthesia Questionnaire

Prior to receiving anesthesia in an office setting, ask the following questions of your anesthesia professional:

- ✓ Are you a *Certified* Registered Nurse Anesthetist or a *board certified* anesthesiologist?
- ✓ Do you regularly provide anesthesia care in office settings? Have you worked in this particular office before?
- ✓ Will you stay with me throughout my surgery?
- ✓ Will you perform a thorough and complete preanesthesia assessment prior to my surgery?
- ✓ Will you develop a care plan for my anesthesia care based on the assessment and other information?
- ✓ If I am considered to be a questionable or inappropriate patient for office surgery and anesthesia, will I be informed of this?
- ✓ Once I leave the operating room, who will be responsible for my care in the recovery room? Will that caregiver stay with me throughout my recovery?
- ✓ Will I be left alone at any time following my procedure while I am still a patient in the facility?
- ✓ What precautions will be taken to minimize my risk of infection?
- ✓ Will you develop a plan to safely manage any pain I experience after surgery?