

What You Need to Know After Anesthesia

Anesthesia is a Major Part of Your Surgery

Each year, millions of people in the United States undergo various surgical and diagnostic procedures requiring anesthesia care. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) partner with you to create and provide an anesthesia and pain management care plan that addresses all aspects of your care before, during, and after the procedure. The overarching goals of CRNAs are to provide safe, effective care that supports you during the procedure and promotes an optimal recovery.

What to Expect After You Have Anesthesia

- ☑ Once your surgery or procedure is complete, you may begin to become aware of your surroundings in the operating or procedure room.
- ☑ When it is safe, your anesthesia provider will transport you to the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), also known as a recovery room, or return to your room if you are awake and stable.
 - In the PACU, nurses will monitor you closely and will provide medications as needed to treat nausea, improve your comfort, and to treat any side effects that may have occurred
 - You will have monitors attached to you that take your vital signs, such as a blood pressure cuff and an EKG monitor. You may have an oxygen mask or nose prongs to help you breathe, if necessary. You will receive fluids through your IV
 - After your procedure, you may become nauseous or vomit. If needed, the nurse may administer medication through your IV
 - Pain is common after surgery. Be sure to tell the nurse your pain level so that they can appropriately provide appropriate medication to make you comfortable
 - Your surgeon and anesthesia provider will check on you while you are in the PACU to see how you are recovering
- ☑ Your family or friends may be able to visit you after your procedure. Check with the facility or nursing staff if visitation is allowed.

Discharge Instructions

- ☑ Your nurse or another healthcare provider will review your discharge instructions with you and give you written discharge information. Make sure you understand the information and discharge instructions. Ask any questions you may have. Discharge instructions may include:
 - Side effects
 - Signs of possible complications to watch for
 - Contact information if complications occur
 - Recommendations for post-surgical pain control. If you are in recovery for substance use disorder, discuss options to avoid triggering a relapse, and if prescription opioids are needed, engage a loved one to help monitor use to support your sobriety
 - Prescription medication instructions

- When and which of your everyday medications you may take
- Foods you can eat
- Activity limits
- Follow-up care instructions including supplies and treatment required at home
- Follow-up appointment with your doctor
- Follow-up tests, if necessary

Follow-up

- ☑ You may receive a follow-up phone call a day or two after you go home to see how you are doing.

Recovering at Home

- ☑ **It is important that you leave the healthcare facility accompanied by a responsible individual.**

This individual is responsible that you get home safely. It is recommended that someone stays with you for up to 24 hours after surgery to help ensure you are safe during your recovery.

- ☑ **Plan on being active as soon as possible.**

To optimize your recovery, it is encouraged that you return to your daily activities the day of or day after surgery. Be sure to check with physician for specific instructions on what types of activities you can and cannot do to keep you safe during your recovery. Some of these activities may include:

- Sitting in a chair
- Walking
- Lifting objects lighter than 10 pounds
- Using stairs with or without someone helping you
- Use of a stationary bike
- Light jogging

- ☑ **It is recommended that you arrange for someone to care for your small children.**

The length of time for recovering from surgery depends on the type of surgery you had and your overall health. If possible, you may want to arrange help before your procedure to take care of your children. You may have the approval to return to your daily activities, but it is best for your healing to plan your day to take breaks, especially when you begin to feel weak or tired. Your energy level may not be the same as it was before your surgery.

- ☑ **Good nutrition is important to your recovery.**

You may slowly return to your regular diet unless your healthcare provider has put you on a special diet. Eat small meals throughout the day, starting with light bland meals, such as broth, liquids, toast, or crackers, and high protein foods to aid in your healing. Avoid spicy, greasy, gas-producing foods. To prevent constipation, drink lots of fluids and include foods with fiber such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

- ☑ **Be sure to contact the surgeon, anesthesia group or the facility where you were treated if you have any questions.**

If you have questions or feel your recovery is not progressing, call your healthcare provider. They care about your recovery and well-being.

- ☑ **Don't drive a car or operate machinery until instructed to do so.**

After anesthesia and surgery, your reactions and judgment may be impaired for up to 24 hours, making driving a car or operating machinery dangerous to you and to others. Clarify with your healthcare provider when you are allowed to drive after your procedure.

- ☑ **Don't take any medications unless prescribed by or discussed with your healthcare provider or anesthesia professional.**

It is best to follow the discharge instructions carefully. You may have received medications that interact with other prescription drugs, such as sleeping pills, tranquilizers, medical marijuana, and over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin or herbal supplements. If you have any questions, please use the contact information provided on your discharge instructions.

- ☑ **Don't drink alcohol or use any drugs not in your aftercare plan for at least 24 hours.**

Alcohol may increase your risk of falling or cause dehydration. This includes hard liquor, beer, and wine. Marijuana and other drugs may increase your risk of falling, injury, and breathing difficulties.

- ☑ **Don't make any important decisions or sign any legal documents for a day following your procedure.**

Important decisions should be avoided for a day or two as anesthesia and pain medication may impair your decision-making abilities.

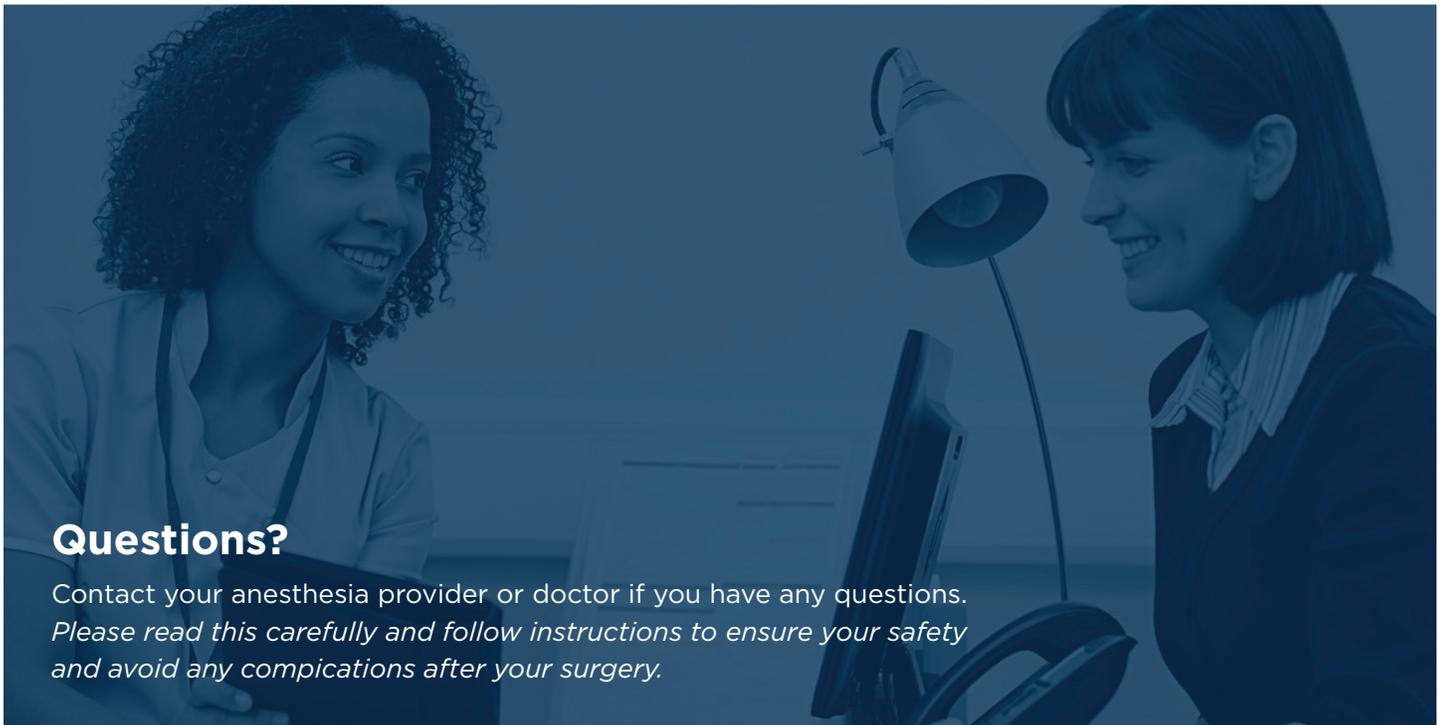
Communication and Following Your Plan Are Important for Recovery

Don't hesitate to contact your healthcare provider or anesthesia professional with any questions or concerns once you are home. It is important that you recover safely from your surgery.

More About CRNAs

Nurse anesthetists have been providing anesthesia care to patients in the United States for more than 150 years. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are anesthesia professionals who administer more than 49 million anesthetics to patients in the United States each year.

CRNAs are highly educated, advanced practice registered nurses, who deliver safe, high-quality anesthesia care. CRNAs are compassionate and always support the health and well-being of their patients. They are happy to speak with you and offer information about what to expect with your anesthesia.



Questions?

Contact your anesthesia provider or doctor if you have any questions.
Please read this carefully and follow instructions to ensure your safety and avoid any complications after your surgery.