

# Preparing for Anesthesia Before Your Surgery

## 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 anesthesia and pain management care that addresses all aspects of your care before, during, and after the procedure. The overarching goal of CRNAs is to provide safe, effective care that supports you during the procedure and promotes an optimal recovery.

## Your Role on the Healthcare Team

When you have a surgical or diagnostic procedure, your health and safety are important. It is important that you include yourself in decisions involving your care. Be sure you understand the process and ask your surgeon or anesthesia provider any questions you may have.

## What to Expect Before You Have Anesthesia

**Pre-admission Testing:** Pre-admission testing may be ordered by your surgeon or the anesthesia team several weeks before your procedure to allow for test results to come in before the day of your procedure. Pre-admission testing may include a series of questions and tests to reduce the risk of allergic reactions, drug interactions, or physical complications before, during, and after the surgical and diagnostic procedures. Other tests, such as blood tests, chest x-rays, and EKG, may also be conducted, as requested by the surgeon or the anesthesia team.

**Ride Home:** Plan for a responsible adult to drive you home after your procedure. Let your surgeon or anesthesia provider know before the day of your procedure if this is not possible.

**Fasting:** Typically, you will be asked to not eat anything after midnight. However, you may be given specific instructions on food and liquids you may be able to eat or drink 2 hours before the procedure. Be sure to clarify with your surgeon and anesthesia team what you are allowed to eat and drink before surgery.

**Medications:** Your medications may have to be adjusted before your surgery. Follow your surgeon's directions for taking medicine prior to your procedure. These medications include blood thinners and blood pressure medications, and some diet, herbal and over the counter medications and medicine-assisted treatment for substance use disorder.

**Alcohol, Smoking and Other Drug Use:** 24 hours before your procedure, do not drink any alcohol or use drugs. Do not smoke or vape.

*It is important to follow any instructions you have received for the night before your surgical or diagnostic procedure to ensure your safety and avoid any delay or cancellation of surgery.*

## Day of Surgery

**Fasting:** Do not chew any kind of gum, candy, or mints. Typically, you will be asked to not eat anything after midnight. However, in some instances you may be given specific instructions on food and liquids you may be able to eat or drink 2 hours prior to the procedure.

**Medications:** Follow your surgeon's instructions on which medications to take on the day of your procedure, or which ones to stop taking and when.

**Alcohol, Smoking and Other Drug Use:** Do not drink any alcohol or use drugs for 24 hours before your procedure. Do not smoke or vape.

**Inhaler:** If you use any inhalers, be sure to bring them with you the day of your procedure.

**Sleep Apnea:** If you use CPAP, autoPAP, or BiPAP machine, bring it and your mask or nasal device with you.

### Lists to Know or Bring with You:

- Allergies to food, latex, the environment, or medications
- Medications taken daily, the dose and how often it is taken. This includes prescriptions, any vitamins, herbal supplements, diet supplements, or other over the counter medications you may be taking
- Previous surgeries or procedures
- Information about your pacemaker if you have one
- General health history

**Pre-Anesthesia Interview:** A pre-anesthesia interview is a time to share your health history and questions with the anesthesia provider and talk about any possible risks to you before you receive anesthesia. It is important for your safety that you are honest and provide complete and accurate information so you and the anesthesia provider can develop the anesthesia care plan that is the safest and most effective for you.

During the interview, the following information is discussed:

- Health history
- Cultural and/or religious beliefs
- Allergies to foods, latex, the environment, or medications
- Prescription or over the counter medications, including herbal supplements, medical marijuana, and medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorder
- Be honest and open about:
  - Smoking, including cigarettes, marijuana, other drugs, and vaping
  - Use of recreational drugs or abuse of prescribed medication
  - Any substance use disorder history so that the anesthesia and aftercare plan can support recovery efforts
- Any reactions to anesthesia in prior surgeries
- Information about your pacemaker, internal cardiac defibrillator (ICD), insulin or pain pump
- An exam of your mouth, teeth, tongue, throat, heart, and lungs
- Review of lab test results, in addition to any tests that may be ordered as needed the day of your procedure

## Types of Anesthesia

**Local Anesthesia:** Given through an injection of medication, local anesthesia numbs the area of the body where the procedure will take place. Local anesthesia is typically used for minor procedures. You may stay awake during the procedure or get additional medicine to help you relax.

**Light or Moderate Sedation:** Sedation ranges from light to deep sedation. During light to moderate sedation, medication is administered through an IV into your vein, which will make you feel relaxed and reduce anxiety. You may feel sleepy but will still be able to respond to questions and commands, although later, you might not have a memory of the procedure. You will be able to breathe on your own.

**Deep Sedation:** Medication is administered through an IV into your vein, causing a decreased state of consciousness in which you may be less responsive and not easily aroused. You may need assistance to breathe.

**General Anesthesia:** Medication may be administered through an IV directly into your vein, through a gas you breathe in, or a combination of both. You will lose consciousness and will not feel pain during the surgery. General anesthesia may cause amnesia, so you forget the surgery and the time immediately after the surgery.

**Regional Anesthesia:** Given through an injection of medication near the nerves or spinal cord, regional anesthesia numbs an area of the body, such as an arm, hand, finger, leg, or the lower body. You may stay awake during the procedure or receive sedation or general anesthesia. Regional anesthesia may be provided for post-procedure pain control.

## 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 delay or cancellation of surgery.*