

TYPES OF ANESTHESIA

General Anesthesia

"General Anesthesia" is typically what people think of when they hear the word "anesthesia". During general anesthesia, you will be unconscious and have no awareness or sensations. Several different medications may be used during general anesthesia. Anesthetic gases or vapors that are given through a breathing tube or a mask may be given in addition to medications given through the IV to induce sleep, relax muscles, and treat pain.

The most common side effect of general anesthesia is sleepiness. This typically subsides within the first hour or two after surgery ends. Some patients may experience a sore throat or nausea. If you have a history of motion sickness or nausea after prior operations, be sure to mention that to your physicians and nurses, as you may need medication before surgery to help prevent nausea afterward.

Serious reactions to general anesthesia are rare. Your anesthesia team has immediate access to emergency medications to treat any kind of reaction and will monitor your vital signs continuously throughout surgery and recovery.

Regional Anesthesia

"Regional anesthesia" makes an area of the body numb to prevent the patient from feeling pain. It can completely block sensation to the area of the body that requires surgery. The anesthesiologist injects numbing medication near the nerves that provide sensation to the surgical area.

A very common type of regional anesthesia is spinal anesthesia. Spinal anesthesia may be used for orthopedic procedures such as total knee and total hip replacements.

Nerve blocks are another type of regional anesthesia that can offer pain relief to a smaller area, such as an arm or leg. Examples include Femoral nerve or Adductor Canal block to numb the thigh and knee. For upper extremity a Scalene block, or Brachial Plexus block to numb the shoulder and arm is used.

In addition to regional anesthesia the anesthesia provider will administer sedation so that you can relax and doze off during the procedure. Sometimes regional anesthesia is used in combination with general anesthesia for major surgery **(this has the advantage of reducing the need for opioid pain medication after surgery)**.

Sedation

Sedation, also known as "monitored anesthesia care" (MAC), is what people often refer to as "twilight". Medications are given, through an IV, to make the patient feel drowsy and relaxed. Different levels of sedation are possible, depending on the type of procedure and the patient's preference.

Under mild sedation, often used for pain procedures when appropriate, a patient is awake and can respond to questions or instructions. With moderate sedation, the patient may doze off but easily awakens. Deep sedation is nearly the same as general anesthesia, the patient is deeply asleep but able to breathe without assistance.

Local Anesthesia

"Local anesthesia" is the term used for medications such as lidocaine that are injected through a needle or applied as a cream to numb a small area. Local anesthesia alone may provide enough pain relief for limited procedures such as carpal tunnel releases or trigger finger releases. It is often used along with sedation during minor outpatient surgery.