



***“Our mission is to care for **every patient**  
and their family as if they were our own.  
Each patient, each family, each and every time.”***

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **Why is it so cold in here?**

Because germs produce faster in warm humid air, therefore to help prevent infection the Surgery Center is kept at a cooler temperature to stop or slow down the rate of germ reproduction and spreading. Warm blankets are provided for your comfort upon request.

### **Why can't I eat or drink before my procedure?**

If your stomach is empty, the risk of vomiting during surgery is greatly reduced. Vomiting during surgery can cause serious complications such as aspiration pneumonia or even death.

### **Why do I need to arrive so early?**

For your safety, there are many things we need to do to prepare for your surgery. Some of these things include completing your registration, go over your plan of care, taking your temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate. We may need to start an IV, shave and/or clean the area of your procedure, or begin your anesthesia plan. We also want to be sure we have time to answer any questions you or your family may have. Additionally, your Surgeon and Anesthesia Provider will visit with you prior to your surgery.

### **Will I have my surgery at the time I am scheduled?**

Your time is important to us and we will make every effort to meet your expected surgery time. We will keep you and your family informed of any delays. Your scheduled surgery time is an estimated time because some procedures may be shorter or longer than expected. This is why we cannot give an exact time. Please feel free to ask if you have any concerns or if you wait more than 30 minutes.

### **How long will I be in recovery?**

Everyone reacts differently to the medications, so recovery depends upon the individual. When you are awake and doing well, your nurse will go over your post-operative instructions with you and your family. For your safety, you must have someone with you for the first 24 hours. You may be at risk of falling and injuring yourself or have an adverse reaction or complication related to your procedure or medications you received. Your safety is our primary concern. Please follow your instructions carefully.

### **Why do I keep having to verify my name and date of birth?**

Patient safety checks are an important component of medical care. For your safety, every staff member who cares for you will verify your name and date of birth to ensure that we have the correct patient.

### **Why is the same information about my procedure repeated?**

For your safety and to help ensure a good outcome for you, we want to be sure you understand important information about your care here at the center and after you go home. We will ask you to tell us what procedure we are doing for you today and what you know and expect about your procedure and recovery. Please take your time to review consent forms and instruction forms carefully and do not hesitate to ask us any questions. We want you to be informed about and comfortable with your plan of care.

*At our center, we are all committed to living our mission. We would appreciate if you would let us know if you have any ideas of how we may improve and please share any other questions or concerns you may have.*

*Thank you for allowing us the privilege to serve you.*



## Anesthesia Side Effects

Side effects of anesthesia can occur during a surgery or procedure, or afterward when you are recovering and the anesthesia is wearing off. The possible side effects vary, depending on what kind of anesthesia you have: general, or local. While some side effects that occur after surgery may be uncomfortable or frustrating, most don't last long.

*If you've had any of these or other side effects or complications with past procedures, tell your anesthesiologist, who may be able to give you medicine before or after the procedure, or make other adjustments to prevent it from happening again.*

### **General Anesthesia (sedation provided through inhaled or intravenous – IV – medications):**

The side effects of general anesthesia can include:

- Nausea & vomiting – This very common side effect can occur within the first few days of having surgery & can be triggered by a number of factors such as medication, motion, and type of surgery.
- Sore throat – The tube that is put in your throat to help you breathe can leave you with a sore throat after it's removed.
- Confusion – Confusion when waking up from surgery is common, but for some people – particularly those who are older – confusion can last for days or weeks.
- Muscle aches – The medications used to relax the muscles so a breathing tube can be inserted can cause soreness.
- Itching – This is a common side effect of narcotics, one type of pain medication sometimes used during general anesthesia.
- Chills and shivering (hypothermia) – This is common when patients regain consciousness after surgery. It can occur in up to half of patients. Researchers aren't sure, but think it might be related to the body cooling down.

Rarely, general anesthesia may cause more serious complications, including:

- Postoperative delirium or cognitive dysfunction – In some cases, confusion and memory loss can last longer than a few hours.
- Delirium – This can last for a few days after surgery. Occasionally, patients can become confused, disoriented or have problems remembering things. It can come and go, and usually disappears after about a week. This condition can be more common when patients are transferred to intensive care after surgery and remain there for several days.
- Cognitive dysfunction – People with heart disease, lung disease, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease, or who have had a stroke, may be at risk for long-term memory loss. Their ability to learn, concentrate and think may be lessened.
- Malignant hyperthermia – Some people inherit this serious, potentially deadly reaction to anesthesia that can occur during surgery, causing a quick fever and muscle contractions. If you or your family member has ever had heat stroke, or suffered from the condition in a previous surgery, be sure to tell the physician anesthesiologist.

### **Regional Anesthesia regional (numbing only part of your body):**

The potential side effects of regional anesthesia (such as an epidural or spinal block, in which an anesthetic is injected in the lower back or a peripheral nerve that affects sensation to an area of the body), include:

- Headache – This can occur a few days after the procedure if some of the spinal fluid leaks out.
- Minor back pain – Soreness can happen at the site where the needle was inserted into the back.
- Difficulty urinating – Because the area below the waist is numbed, it may be difficult to urinate.
- Hematoma – Bleeding beneath the skin can occur where the anesthesia was injected.

Serious but rare complications include:

- Pneumothorax – When anesthesia is injected near the lungs, the needle may accidentally enter the lung. This could cause the lung to collapse and require a chest tube to be inserted.
- Nerve damage – Although very rare, nerve damage can occur, causing temporary or permanent pain.

### **Local Anesthesia Injection (numbing a small area):**

Injection of local anesthesia numbs just the part of your body requiring minor surgery or a procedure. Side effects are minimal and usually are related to how much anesthesia is injected.



## Important Information About What to Expect During Your Recovery

**ANESTHESIA:** The side effects of anesthesia or sedation can last more than 24 hours, therefore you must have a responsible adult to stay with you for at least 24 hours. Please rest the remainder of the day. Although you may feel “normal”, your reflexes and mental ability may be impaired. You may feel dizzy, lightheaded, and/or sleepy for 24 hours or longer. After general anesthesia, it is normal to feel generalized aching and sore muscles for 24 hours. In addition, a sore throat may occur.

Do not consume alcohol, drive, operate appliances or hazardous machinery, and/or make any important personal or business decisions for 24 hours or while taking pain medication. Make sure you have assistance when up and about to avoid injury as a result of a fall.

**DIET:** Drink plenty of fluids and progress to your normal diet as tolerated, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

**NAUSEA:** It is not uncommon to experience nausea and/or vomiting after surgery. If you are unable to keep food and/or liquids down or your nausea/vomiting is persistent, please contact your surgeon’s office. Your surgeon’s office may decide to call in and/or write a prescription to help with the nausea/vomiting if needed.

**BLEEDING:** It is not uncommon to experience some minor bleeding after surgery. However, if bleeding is excessive or blood is coming through your dressing, please apply light pressure and call your surgeon’s office right away for further instructions. If you feel this is an emergency, dial 911, or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

**INFECTION:** Call your surgeon if you experience any signs/symptoms of infection including: foul smelling or unusual drainage, excessive pain, redness, heat, or swelling near the site and/or fever greater than 100.4.

Good hand hygiene is important during your recovery. Your dressing should remain clean and dry until otherwise instructed by your physician. Follow your physician’s instructions regarding bathing and wound and/or dressing care to help prevent infection.

**PAIN:** For your comfort and safety, please follow your doctor’s instructions regarding postop activity and taking pain medication. Some discomfort after a procedure may be expected, please notify your doctor of any excessive or intolerable pain that is not controlled by your pain medication and other comfort measures.

**Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)/Pulmonary Embolism (PE)-**These are dangerous blot clots that may occur after surgery. Please follow doctor’s instructions and adhere to specific weight bearing restrictions. Examine legs daily for increased swelling or pain. Wear support hose if prescribed, change positions often or walk, drink plenty of fluids. Keep your legs elevated above the level of your heart while sitting at rest. If you experience worsening symptoms such as pain in the calf or lower leg, swelling of the leg or lower extremity, surface veins becoming more visible, any signs of complications from anticoagulation therapy (when prescribed) such as unusual bleeding (e.g. nosebleed, bleeding gums, red or cola colored urine, black bowel movements). Call your doctor with any questions or concerns.

**If you develop sudden onset of difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, or chest pain, Call 911 and/or go to the nearest Emergency Room immediately!**

Once you are home, if you have any questions/concerns regarding your procedure or home care instructions please call your surgeon’s office.