

Welcome to Southcoast Hospital Perioperative Services

Anesthesia Guidelines for Surgery

Your Safety is the Top Priority

Modern anesthesia is extraordinarily safe when administered and managed by trained medical professionals. Your anesthesia team will include a doctor who specializes in anesthesiology, and very often a CRNA (certified registered nurse anesthetist). Both are professionals that have received years of advanced medical training and are completely qualified to provide you with the safest anesthesia care possible anywhere.

A summary of common concerns follows but does not include all possible options and questions. Since open communication with your anesthesia team helps to ensure a safe and smooth outcome for your procedure, make sure to address any concerns or questions with your anesthesia team when they visit you before your procedure. **Depending on the type of procedure/operation you are scheduled to undergo, your pre-operative instructions may include the following:**

Fasting Instructions:

- Do not eat solid food 8 hours before your procedure.
- You may drink clear liquids **Only** (e.g., black coffee or tea, water, apple juice) up to 2 hours before your arrival time at the hospital or surgery center. **No** alcohol, **no** juices with pulp (**no** orange juice), and **no** milk or creamer in your coffee or tea.
- Do not chew gum or have hard or soft candy during this time.
- Refrain from smoking during the fasting period (Including tobacco and cannabis products)

Types of Anesthesia:

- **General Anesthesia:** When undergoing a procedure with general anesthesia, you will be completely unconscious and unaware of all things. You may or may not have a breathing tube or other device placed in your airway after you are asleep to assure that your lungs and body receive the oxygen necessary for you to be safe.
- **Regional Anesthesia:** Regional anesthesia renders a large specific part of the body (such as a limb) numb to feeling or sensation. Regional anesthesia includes spinals, epidurals, or nerve blocks placed with the aid of an ultrasound device. Surgeries done under regional anesthesia are most often combined with intravenous sedation (see below).

- **Sedation (Monitored Anesthesia Care or MAC):** During MAC sedation, you receive medications that cause relaxation and sleepiness, but you may still be able to respond to voice or touch. It is most common, however, that patients do not remember anything and are not wide awake for their surgery.
- **Local Anesthesia:** During local anesthesia you are wide awake, and your surgeon will numb a small area for a minor procedure. Typically, this involves a small needle placed just underneath the skin to administer the numbing medication.

Common Concerns:

- **Awareness or Awakening During Surgery**
 - This is extremely rare with procedures/operations that involve general anesthesia.
 - Monitors are used during general anesthesia to ensure you remain fully asleep and unaware of your surroundings.
 - It is possible to have some awareness during Sedation (Monitored Anesthesia Care), but it is unusual to experience any pain or discomfort.
- **Nausea & Vomiting**
 - Many people are sensitive to even common medications, so nausea and vomiting are possible after awakening from anesthesia.
 - Medications to prevent or treat nausea are given before, during, and after surgery to reduce the risk.
- **Allergic Reactions**
 - Allergic reactions to anesthesia are very rare and can range from mild to serious.
 - Report all allergies and past adverse reactions you have had to anesthesia, latex, or medications.
- **Pain Control**
 - Discuss your expectations of immediate postoperative pain issues and options with your surgical care team.
 - Anesthesiologists may use oral, intravenous medications or nerve blocks to control and minimize pain during and after surgery.

- **Breathing Problems**
 - Your breathing and respiratory status are supported and monitored very closely throughout your surgical experience. However, it is imperative that you communicate any long-term or current issues like asthma, COPD, sleep apnea, a recent cold, or that you smoke and/or vape.

- **Heart Complications**
 - Undergoing any surgical procedure is physically stressful. Pre-existing heart conditions often place you at a higher risk of complications. These risks increase with age or the severity of your underlying conditions (e.g., high blood pressure, heart disease).
 - Your anesthesiologist will review your pertinent medical history and modify the plan for your anesthesia if necessary.

Important Preoperative Steps:

- Communicate your complete medical history, including any recent illness (fever, cold, cough, or COVID exposure) to your anesthesia team before your surgery.
- Bring a list of all medications and supplements that you take.
- Follow all pre-operative instructions including fasting from food and liquid.
- Communicate any issues or complications with previous procedures you had that required anesthesia.
- **Smoking, Alcohol and Drug Use:**
 - Avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco at least 24 – 48 hours before anesthesia.
 - The use of non-prescribed medications or recreational drugs can lead to significant complications during and after your procedure. Please refrain from their use in the 24 hours leading to your surgery.

Emotional Concerns:

- It is normal and expected that you feel anxious or fearful prior to your procedure. Your anesthesia team can help relieve much of your anxiety before your procedure begins by answering your questions, addressing your fears, and sometimes using medications. Ask questions and express concerns — your anesthesia provider is there to help and support you.

Day of Surgery Checklist:

- Arrive on time at the surgical center or hospital.
- **You must have an adult to escort and drive you home after it is safe to leave the surgical center. If you live alone, it is recommended you arrange to have a family member or friend stay with you overnight after your procedure. Not having a ride or someone to stay with you after surgery may result in your surgery being cancelled.**
- Do not wear make-up, lotions, or jewelry.
- Bring your I.D., insurance card, and list of current medications.
- **It is important that you know what medications you can take up to and including the morning of your surgery and the medications that will need to be **stopped** before the day of surgery.**
- **Please review your medication list for specific instructions at the Preadmission Testing Appointment (PAT) or with your physician when surgery is scheduled.**

We thank you for the opportunity to take care of you and look forward to your having a safe and uneventful surgery or procedure and recovery.