

Anesthesia Frequently Asked Questions

We understand that anesthesia can be one of the biggest concerns patients have before surgery. Our anesthesia team will review your medical history, discuss your anesthesia plan with you, answer your questions, and monitor you closely throughout your procedure and recovery.

The type of anesthesia you receive will depend on your procedure, medical history, current health, and the recommendation of your anesthesia provider.

What is anesthesia?

Anesthesia is medication used to help keep you comfortable and safe during a surgical or medical procedure. Depending on the type of anesthesia used, it may prevent pain, help you relax, make you sleepy, or allow you to remain completely unconscious during your procedure.

What types of anesthesia are used?

Depending on your procedure and individual needs, your anesthesia plan may include general anesthesia, monitored anesthesia care (MAC)/sedation, regional anesthesia, local anesthesia, or a combination of techniques. Your anesthesia provider will determine the most appropriate option based on your procedure and medical condition.

Will I meet my anesthesia provider before surgery?

Yes. Before your procedure, your anesthesia provider will meet with you in the pre-operative area. They will review your medical history, medications, allergies, previous experiences with anesthesia, and any testing or medical clearances that may have been completed. This is also an opportunity to ask questions or discuss any concerns you have about anesthesia.

How does the anesthesia team determine what is safest for me?

Your anesthesia plan is individualized based on several factors, including your medical history, medications, allergies, age, current health, previous experiences with anesthesia, and the type and length of your procedure. Your anesthesia provider will make the final determination regarding the safest and most appropriate anesthesia plan for you.

Why can't I eat or drink before anesthesia?

Having food or liquid in your stomach while receiving anesthesia can increase the risk of aspiration, which occurs when stomach contents enter the lungs. Aspiration can cause serious complications, including choking, pneumonia, lung injury, breathing problems, hospitalization or death. It is very important to follow the fasting instructions provided by Lake Ridge Ambulatory Surgery Center. If you accidentally eat or drink after the time you were instructed to stop, please tell our staff. For your safety, your procedure may need to be delayed, rescheduled, or canceled.

Can I take my medications the morning of surgery?

Some medications should be taken as usual, while others may need to be held or adjusted before surgery. During your pre-operative assessment, our clinical team will review your medications and provide instructions based on your procedure and medical history. Please follow the medication instructions provided to you. If you are unsure whether you should take a medication, contact us before taking it.

What if I forgot to stop a medication before surgery?

Please notify our clinical team as soon as possible. Do not withhold this information. Whether your procedure can safely proceed will depend on the medication, when it was last taken, your medical history, and the type of procedure being performed. Your anesthesia provider and surgeon will determine whether it is safe to proceed.

Will I need an IV?

Most patients receiving anesthesia or sedation will require an IV. The IV allows your anesthesia team to administer medications and fluids and respond quickly if medication is needed during your procedure. Your clinical team will discuss your IV with you during pre-operative preparation. An IV is typically not needed if your procedure is scheduled as a Local Anesthesia Only.

What happens if you cannot start my IV?

Our clinical team will make appropriate attempts to safely establish IV access. If an IV cannot be obtained and IV access is necessary for your anesthesia plan, your anesthesia provider will determine whether it is safe to proceed. Your procedure may need to be delayed, rescheduled, or canceled if anesthesia cannot be administered safely.

What if I am extremely nervous about anesthesia?

It is normal to feel nervous before surgery. Please tell your nurse and anesthesia provider if you are experiencing significant anxiety. We want to understand your concerns and help make your experience as comfortable as possible. For your safety, you must be able to cooperate with the clinical team during the necessary preparation for anesthesia. If anesthesia cannot be safely administered, your anesthesia provider will determine whether your procedure can proceed.

What if my blood pressure is high on the day of surgery?

Your blood pressure will be checked during your pre-operative assessment at the surgery center. If it is significantly elevated, your anesthesia provider will evaluate you and determine whether it is safe to proceed. Depending on the severity of the elevation and your overall medical condition, your procedure may need to be delayed, rescheduled, or canceled for your safety.

I have sleep apnea. Should I bring my CPAP or BiPAP machine?

Please inform our clinical team if you have sleep apnea or use CPAP or BiPAP at home. Lake Ridge Ambulatory Surgery Center does not use patients' personal CPAP or BiPAP machines. Please do not bring your personal machine to the surgery center. Our clinical team uses facility-approved respiratory and monitoring equipment.

when needed to maintain standardized care, infection prevention practices, and patient safety. Your anesthesia provider will consider your sleep apnea when developing your anesthesia and recovery plan.

Will I be completely asleep?

That depends on the type of anesthesia planned for your procedure. Some patients receive general anesthesia and are completely unconscious, while others receive sedation, regional anesthesia, local anesthesia, or a combination of techniques. Your anesthesia provider will explain what you should expect before your procedure.

Will I feel or remember anything during my procedure?

Your experience will depend on the type of anesthesia you receive. Your anesthesia provider will discuss the expected level of sedation or unconsciousness with you before your procedure. If you have concerns about being awake, feeling discomfort, or remembering your procedure, please discuss them with your anesthesia provider.

Will someone monitor me while I am under anesthesia?

Yes. Your anesthesia provider will monitor you throughout your procedure. This may include continuous monitoring of your heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen level, breathing, and other important functions as appropriate for your anesthesia and procedure.

What happens when my procedure is over?

After your procedure, you will be taken to the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), also known as the recovery area. Our recovery nurses will closely monitor you as you wake up and recover from anesthesia. Your vital signs, comfort level, pain, nausea, and overall recovery will be assessed before you are discharged.

Will I have pain or nausea after anesthesia?

Some discomfort, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, or other temporary side effects may occur after anesthesia. Our team will monitor you and provide treatment when appropriate. Our goal is to manage your symptoms effectively and keep you as comfortable as medically possible while you recover.

Why do I need someone to drive me home?

Anesthesia and sedation will affect your judgment, coordination, reaction time, balance, and ability to make decisions, even if you feel awake and alert. Patients receiving anesthesia or sedation must have a responsible adult available to drive them home and receive discharge instructions. You may NOT drive yourself home after receiving anesthesia or sedation.

Can I take an Uber, Lyft, taxi, or public transportation home?

You may not leave the surgery center alone using a taxi, rideshare service, or public transportation after receiving anesthesia or sedation. A rideshare service such as Uber or Lyft may only be used when your responsible adult physically accompanies you in the vehicle and assumes responsibility for your safe discharge.

Can my procedure be canceled by the anesthesia provider?

Yes. Your anesthesia provider is responsible for determining whether anesthesia can be safely administered. If there is a medical or safety concern on the day of surgery, your procedure may be delayed, postponed, or canceled. Although this can be disappointing, these decisions are made with your safety as the highest priority.

Who should I contact if I have questions about anesthesia before my procedure?

If you have questions or concerns about your medical history, medications, previous anesthesia experiences, or upcoming procedure, please discuss them during your pre-operative assessment. If you have questions after your pre-operative assessment is complete, please call our office. You will also have an opportunity to speak directly with your anesthesia provider before your procedure begins. Never hesitate to ask questions. We want you to understand your care and feel informed before your procedure.