

# Your Child's Anesthesia: What you can do to help



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Your child is having surgery. Your child is given medication so he or she:

- ▶ does not feel pain.
- ▶ sleeps and is not aware during the surgery.

This medication is called anesthesia. The doctor who gives this medication is called an anesthesiologist.

## How can I help?



Talk to your child about going to the hospital and about the surgery.

- ▶ If your child is 2 to 3 years old, talk to him or her 2 to 3 days before the surgery. Talk to him or her again on the morning of the surgery.
- ▶ If your child is over three years old, begin talking to him or her about the surgery a few weeks before.

Follow all instructions you are given, especially about what your child can eat or drink the day before and the day of surgery. If you cannot remember these instructions call 604-875-2345 ext. 7225.

You and your child will meet with the anesthesiologist before the surgery. Tell the anesthesiologist:

- ▶ if you have any concerns.
- ▶ what helps to calm and comfort your child. Before your child goes into the operating room, the anesthesiologist may give your child some medicine to help prevent pain or relieve anxiety.
- ▶ if your child has any medical problems or allergies.
- ▶ if your child has recently had a cold.

On the day of the surgery, be calm and positive while you wait with your child. The anesthesiologist will decide if you will be able to go with your child to the operating room until they are asleep.

## Here is some information that families often want to know about anesthesia.

### Is anesthesia safe?

It is very safe. Children rarely have an allergy to the anesthesia medicine. There is no risk of these medications being habit forming.

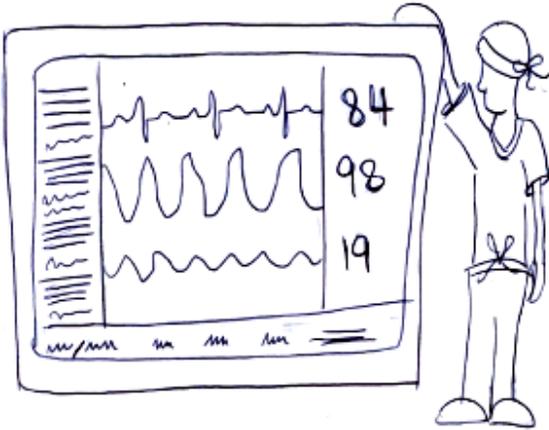
Your child's anesthesiologist can answer any questions you have. Please ask!

<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/childrensinfo> also gives more information about risk and anesthesia.

## How does anesthesia work?

The medications seem to slow down the nerve cells in the brain. The brain returns to normal after the medicines are gone.

Your child's anesthesiologist is a medical doctor. They have done at least another 6 years of specialty training after graduating from medical school.



## How is anesthesia given to my child?

In the operating room, some children are given medication into a small tube that goes into a vein. This is called intravenous or IV medicine. This medicine puts the child to sleep. Some children are given anesthesia by breathing gas and oxygen through a face mask.

Sometimes nerves are frozen to make surgery more comfortable. This is called local anesthesia. It is given by a needle close to the nerve being frozen. Your child's anesthesiologist will decide which will be best.

## What should I expect after the surgery ?

Your child will wake up in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit or "PACU". Once your child is awake, you can visit him or her in the PACU. Children vary a lot in how long they sleep after anesthesia.

Most children in PACU are not in pain. If your child is in pain or feels sick, the anesthesiologist will order medicine to help her or him feel better. The nurse and anesthesiologist work together.

## Are there side effects of anesthesia when we go home?

Yes. After anesthesia children may:

- ▶ have a sore throat.
- ▶ throw up or feel like throwing up.
- ▶ feel dizzy.
- ▶ feel drowsy.
- ▶ be disturbed.

You can help your child after anesthesia by comforting her or him and being calm. Read more about this in the pamphlet "24 Hours After General Anesthesia".

For more information about anesthesia:

[www.pedsanesthesia.org/patiented/faq.iphtml](http://www.pedsanesthesia.org/patiented/faq.iphtml)

