

What does my anesthesiologist do during the surgery?

Your anesthesiologist is responsible for your comfort and care before and during your surgery. In the operating room, he/she will direct your anesthesia and manage your vital functions (heart rate, blood pressure, heart rhythm, body temperature and breathing). The anesthesiologist is also responsible for fluid and blood replacement, when necessary.

On some occasions, people requiring surgery may have other medical conditions such as diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure or asthma. Rest assured that your anesthesiologist is acutely aware to your conditions and well-prepared to treat them during your surgery and immediately afterward. As doctors, anesthesiologists are uniquely qualified to treat not only sudden medical problems related to surgery, but also your chronic conditions that may need special attention during your procedure.

Is the anesthesiologist's job done after the surgery?

He/She continues to be responsible for your care in the recovery room. Here, they will direct the staff that is monitoring your condition as the anesthesia wears off. The anesthesiologist decides when you are able to leave the recovery room. Anesthesiologists often also participate in management of pain following surgery. They may prescribe intravenous or oral medications, perform nerve blocks to numb the site of surgery and visit with you to ensure your pain is well managed in the hospital.

Will I receive a separate bill from the anesthesiologist?

Your anesthesiologist is a specialist (like your internist or surgeon) and you probably will receive a bill for their services as you would from your other physicians. If you have any financial concerns, your anesthesiologist or a member of their staff will answer your questions. Please note that your hospital may charge separately for the medications and equipment used for your anesthetic. You can also contact your health insurance to inquire about your coverage.

Anything else I should know or do?

If you are well-informed and know what to expect, you will be better prepared and more relaxed for your surgery and anesthesia. Be sure to ask questions and discuss any concerns you might have with your anesthesiologist about your upcoming anesthetic care.

North American  Partners in Anesthesia

Anesthesia, Your Anesthesiologist and You.

A simple question and answer guide.



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Who are anesthesiologists?

Anesthesiologists are critical members of your surgical team and they have the responsibility of monitoring your welfare when you undergo anesthesia. You may not realize it, but your anesthesiologist is *your* advocate in the operating room. Your well-being is their top-priority.

What's the difference between a doctor and an anesthesiologist?

Anesthesiologists are medical doctors who specialize in anesthesiology, which is the use of pain-blocking techniques or medications (anesthetics) used during your surgery/medical procedures.

Their role in the operating room is simple: to ensure your comfort during surgery as well as make informed medical judgments to protect you. These include changes in your life functions such as breathing, heart rate and blood pressure, which are all affected by the surgery being performed.

The role of an anesthesiologist extends beyond the operating and recovery room. Anesthesiologists also

work in intensive care units to help restore critically ill patients to stable condition.

Anesthesiologists can be board-certified through the Board of Anesthesiology, which is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties.

Where do anesthesiologists work?

Anesthesiologists provide care in operating rooms for surgery as well as in many procedure sites throughout the hospital. They are able to provide sedation and supportive care during almost any procedure.

May I choose my anesthesiologist for my surgery?

Of course you can. You usually have a choice as to who your anesthesiologist will be. Your surgeon may refer you to an anesthesiologist or you may select one based on a personal recommendation or based on personal experience. Feel free to call the anesthesia office with any additional questions.

Is it important to sit down with my anesthesiologist before surgery?

Absolutely. Anesthesia and surgery affects your entire body. Therefore, it is important for your anesthesiologist to know as much about you as possible. During the pre-operative interview, your anesthesiologist will carefully evaluate you and your medical history – as well as inquire about any recent medications.

During this talk, your anesthesiologist will most likely touch on these points:

- The procedures associated with your surgery
- Your anesthetic choices (including their risks and benefits)
- Any tests that may be needed
- What medications might be prescribed for you

If you do not meet your anesthesiologist during a pre-operation interview, you will meet them immediately before your



surgery. At this point, he/she will review your medical chart for a clear understanding of your needs and medical condition.

What are the different types of anesthesia?

There are three main categories of anesthesia: local, regional and general.

Local anesthesia numbs a small part of the body. You get a shot of local anesthetic directly into the surgical area to block pain. It is used only for minor procedures. You may stay awake during the procedure, or you may get medicine to help you relax or sleep.

Regional anesthesia blocks pain to a larger part of your body. Anesthetic is injected around major nerves or the spinal cord. Like with local anesthesia, you may also get medicine to help you relax or sleep when receiving regional anesthesia.

General anesthesia affects the brain as well as the entire body. You may get it through a vein (intravenously), or you may breathe it in. With general anesthesia, you are completely unaware and do not feel pain during the surgery. General anesthesia also often causes you to forget the surgery and the time right after it.

Your anesthesiologist and surgeon together will determine what type of anesthesia is best for you. These options will be discussed prior to your surgery with your anesthesiologist.

