

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 the medical chart for a clear understanding of your child's needs and medical condition.

What type of anesthesia will my child receive?

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

Will I receive a separate bill from the anesthesiologist?

The 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 will charge separately for the medications and equipment used for your anesthetic. You can also contact your health insurance to inquire about your coverage.

North American  Partners in Anesthesia

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What if your child needs anesthesia?

A simple question and answer guide every parent should read.



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When your child needs anesthesia, where do you turn for answers? NAPA.

What if your child needs surgery that requires anesthesia?

If your child needs to have an operation, you probably have plenty of questions – including some about anesthesia. That’s where your doctor and your anesthesiologist come in. They can answer ALL your questions and assure you – as well as your child – that the procedure will go smoothly.

It is important for you to be a strong support system for your child. The more prepared, calm, and reassuring you are about the surgery *and* the anesthesia, the easier the experience will probably be for both parent and child.

Should I talk to my child about anesthesia?

Absolutely. Explain that the anesthesia will prevent the child from feeling pain during the procedure. In addition, let your child know where you’ll be during the whole experience. Reassure your child that you’ll be in the waiting room nearby during the surgery and in the recovery room when they wake up after the



surgery. You may also be able to sit with your child until he or she falls asleep before the surgery. Discuss this with your anesthesiologist.

Avoid frightening language.

For example, don’t say, “you’ll be given gas” or “you’ll be put to sleep.” A child may confuse “gas” with the fuel that can poison or kill, and confuse “put to sleep” with what happened to the family pet. Also avoid saying, “you’ll be taking a nap” — young kids may think all future naps mean surgery. Feel free to ask your anesthesiologist what other tips they can share to help you and your child.

As you talk to your child about the hospital and surgery, remember to stay calm. Your tone, facial expressions and body language can sometimes send an unintentional message to your child. If they sense you are scared or feel confused, they will feel that way, too. As hard as it may seem, try not to cry in front of your child. If you need a few minutes to compose yourself, go into another room.

What if my child is afraid?

Honestly, it’s fairly normal. Many kids fear that an operation will be painful. It can help to explain that a special doctor, called an anesthesiologist, gives medicine to make patients sleep very deeply so they won’t feel anything during the operation and once it’s finished, they’ll wake up. (Older kids, in particular, need special assurances that they will wake up.)

Common fears of young children include the possibility of separation from/abandonment parents as well as the possibility of pain. Assure your child that not only will you be there when he or she wakes up, but a favorite toy can come along, too. Be sure to tell your child that if anything feels sore right after the operation, a doctor or nurse can give medication that will make it feel better.



Older children (pre-teens or teens) may worry about “loss of control”, in which they fear they may say or do something embarrassing. They can be reassured that they will not talk or move inappropriately while under anesthesia.

May I choose my child’s anesthesiologist?

A qualified anesthesiologist will be assigned to take care of your child. If you or your surgeon recommend a specific anesthesiologist, every attempt will be made to assign that anesthesiologist to your child’s surgery.

Your choice of anesthesiologist should happen in advance of any surgery. Since your anesthesiologist is responsible for the comfort, safety and medical care of your child during surgery, it is important that you meet before entering the operating room.

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

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