

Anesthesia and You (Anesthesia for Oral Surgery)

What kind of anesthesia will I receive?

You have been referred to this office because of the challenging nature of treatment requested by your dentist. Your anesthesia needs are determined by your medical condition(s) as well as the type of operation you will have. Our surgeons employ a variety of anesthetic modalities to make your experience as comfortable and safe as possible. These include:

Local Anesthetic

Local anesthetic can be an effective method for eliminating pain associated with removal of a tooth. Our experience is that this form of anesthesia provides very limited options for both the patient and surgeon. Local anesthesia does not diminish an individual's awareness of pressure, vibration and/or noise associated with tooth removal or related surgeries. Likewise, if an individual has a badly infected tooth, frequently, local anesthetic will be ineffective in eliminating discomfort as well. Often times, individuals will have a variety of medical problems which prohibit the use of local anesthesia alone.

Intravenous Sedation

Intravenous sedative agents are administered which provide relaxation and pain control. This involves the full monitoring of vital signs, breathing rate, blood pressure and the use of an electrocardiogram. It should be noted that in very anxious individuals, this form of anesthesia can be ineffective. It is important to understand that this technique does **not fully** diminish one's awareness of the procedure.

General Anesthesia

This is the most common form of anesthesia administered in our office. It is extremely safe and effective. Likewise, the recovery from general anesthetic is quite fast, and the same as the recovery associated with intravenous sedation. This technique allows us to completely eliminate an individual's awareness of the procedure. General anesthesia also reduces the risk of any involuntary movement by the individual during surgery.

How long is the surgery expected to last?

This depends mostly on the nature of the surgery and is best answered by your surgeon.

How will I be monitored during the surgery, and by whom?

Your anesthetic team is personally responsible for your comfort and well being. Blood pressure, pulse rate, EKG and oxygen levels are some of the important vital signs that are monitored during your surgery.

What emergency procedures are in place in case there's a serious complication?

Our office has the necessary emergency drugs, equipment and procedures in place to care for you in the rare event of a serious complication. Anesthesiologists have the specialized medical training to anticipate and treat complications. All of our nurses and doctors have current advanced cardiac life support training (ACLS) and we frequently rehearse emergency drills. In rare instances, serious complications may require that you are transferred to a local hospital.

Who will monitor my recovery after surgery and for how long?

According to guidelines established by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, all phases of anesthesia, including recovery, should be supervised. Your anesthesiologist, as well as our experienced nurses, will monitor your needs for your safe recovery. You may be given extra oxygen and your breathing and heart functions will be observed closely. You will not be discharged home until you are fit to go, usually within one hour after surgery.

Will I have any side effects?

The amount of discomfort you experience will depend on a number of factors, especially the type of surgery. Your doctors and nurses can relieve pain after your surgery with medicines given by mouth, injection or by numbing the area around the incision. Your discomfort should be tolerable, but do not expect to be totally pain-free.

Nausea or vomiting may be related to anesthesia, the type of surgical procedure or postoperative pain medications. Although less of a problem today because of improved anesthetic agents and techniques, these side effects continue to occur for some patients.

Medications to minimize postoperative pain, nausea and vomiting are often given by your anesthesiologist during the surgical procedure and in recovery. You may experience a sore throat and/or nose bleed, which usually resolve quickly.

Recovery at home

What can I expect?

Be prepared to go home and finish your recovery there. Patients often experience drowsiness and minor after-effects following ambulatory anesthesia, including muscle aches, sore throat and occasional dizziness or headaches. Nausea also may be present, but vomiting is less common. These side effects usually decline rapidly in the hours following surgery. The majority of patients do not feel up to their typical activities the next day. Plan to take it easy for a few days until you feel back to normal. Know that a period of recovery at home is common and to be expected.

Follow Up

Be sure to follow the instructions given to you while at the surgical facility. These instructions are important to permit the fastest, safest and most pleasant recovery possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to call our office.

Sometime after your ambulatory anesthesia, and surgery, you will be contacted to see how you feel and if you had any problems. You may receive a telephone call from our surgical facility or a questionnaire to mail back. It is important to use this opportunity to let your caregivers know how you feel so they may provide the best possible care.

Office telephone numbers:

(403) 271-1665

1-800-342-0382