



Anesthesia—General

During surgery, an anesthesiologist will put you to sleep so that you do not experience any pain. The combination of drugs and/or gases that puts you to sleep and prevents pain is called general anesthesia.

Anesthetic medications are usually delivered through an IV in your arm or hand. Once you fall asleep, you will not be aware of anything until you wake up after surgery. Once asleep, your anesthesiologist may put a tube in your airway and put you on a respirator to help you breathe and to deliver additional anesthetics. Monitors will record your blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen concentration, and your anesthesiologist will make sure your lungs, kidneys and heart are functioning well.

When you awaken after surgery, the tube in your throat will be removed and you will be watched in the recovery room until you are fully alert.

General anesthesia is very safe, but there are some risks. You could have an allergic reaction to the anesthesia, and you may experience nausea and vomiting following surgery. There are also small risks of lung infection, heart attack, and stroke. You can help prevent these risks by telling your doctor about any allergies you have, about all the medications you take, and about all your medical conditions. Also, be sure to tell your doctor if you or anyone in your family has ever experienced problems with anesthesia in the past.