



North American
Partners in Anesthesia

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Frequently Asked Questions about Anesthesia

You or your loved one will be undergoing a surgical procedure and you have a question or two about anesthesia. That's certainly understandable and you're certainly not alone!

To help educate and guide you through the process, North American Partners in Anesthesia (NAPA) has compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) about local, regional and general anesthesia and their answers.

Are there different types of anesthesia?

Yes. There are three main types of anesthesia: local anesthesia, regional anesthesia, and general anesthesia. Each has many forms and uses.

Local Anesthesia

In local anesthesia, the anesthetic drug is usually injected into the tissue to numb the specific location of your body having minor surgery, (for example, the hand or foot).

Regional Anesthesia

In regional anesthesia, your anesthesiologist injects near a cluster of nerves to numb the area of your body that requires surgery. You may remain awake or you may be given a sedative. Either way, you will not see or feel the actual surgery take place. There are several kinds of regional anesthesia. Two of the most frequently used are spinal anesthesia and epidural anesthesia, which are produced by injections made with great exactness into the appropriate areas of the back. Both are typically used during childbirth and prostate surgery.

General Anesthesia

With general anesthesia, you are unconscious and have no awareness or sensation. General anesthetic drugs include gases and vapors inhaled through a breathing mask or tube and medications introduced through a vein. During anesthesia, your anesthesiologist will carefully monitor and control your major bodily functions via sophisticated equipment. A breathing tube may be inserted through your mouth and frequently into the windpipe to maintain proper breathing during this period. The length and level of anesthesia is calculated and constantly adjusted with great precision. At the conclusion of surgery, your anesthesiologist will reverse the process and you will regain consciousness in the recovery room.

What are the risks of anesthesia?

All operations and all anesthesia procedures have some risk associated with them. These risks depend upon many factors, including the type of surgery and the medical condition of the patient. Fortunately, adverse events are very rare. Rest assured that your anesthesiologist will take precautions to prevent an accident from occurring, just as you do when driving a car or crossing the street.

Since the specific risks may vary, depending on what you are having done and your condition, we suggest you ask your anesthesiologist about the risks that may be associated with your upcoming anesthesia procedure.



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Can I eat or drink prior to my anesthesia procedure?

As a general rule, you should not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before a surgery. In certain cases, the anesthesiologist may give a patient permission to drink clear liquids up to a few hours before the anesthesia procedure.

Should I take my usual medicines?

Some medications can and should be taken and others should not. It is important to discuss this issue with your surgeon or anesthesiologist thoroughly to prevent any adverse effects. Do not interrupt any medication unless your anesthesiologist or surgeon specifically recommends it.

Could herbal medicines or other dietary supplements affect my anesthesia?

Anesthesiologists are currently researching exactly how certain herbs and dietary supplements interact with particular anesthetics. They are finding that certain herbal medicines may prolong the effects of anesthesia. Others may increase the risk of bleeding or raise blood pressure. Some effects may be subtle and less critical, but for anesthesiologists it is better to anticipate a possible reaction than to react to an unexpected situation. That is why it is very important to tell your doctor about everything you normally take before you have surgery.

How is an epidural block performed for labor and delivery?

An epidural block is given in the lower back while you are either sitting up or lying on your side. The block is administered below the level of the spinal cord. First, the anesthesiologist will use a local anesthetic to numb an area of your lower back. Then a special needle is placed in the epidural space just outside the spinal sac.

Does NAPA accept my insurance?

NAPA makes every effort to participate with all major insurance carriers. Please see the insurance listing on the site for a comprehensive list of insurances accepted by each state, and how each one is applied.

I received two bills from NAPA. Am I being double billed?

No, you are not being double billed. We understand it can be confusing but we must abide by Medicare regulations put in place by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). According to these regulations, all services performed by a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) or an Anesthesia Assistant (AA) under medical direction or supervision of an anesthesiologist must be billed separately.

So, if there was a CRNA or AA involved with your anesthesia procedure, the charge for anesthesia services will be divided and half of the charge will be billed out under the anesthesiologist and the other half under the CRNA or AA. Medicare will then split what they pay out between the anesthesiologist and the CRNA or AA. In other words, it's the exact charge put in place by CMS, divided between two different providers.



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I received a statement saying my payment was past due but I already sent a check. Didn't you receive my payment?

Sometimes the statements we send and your check cross in the mail. Please check the date on the statement as it may have been mailed prior to your payment being posted to your account. If you still have questions, please contact our Customer Service Department for information about your specific account.

Why did I receive a collection letter when I never received a statement?

It is unlikely you would receive a collection letter prior to receiving a statement from NAPA. We make every effort to resolve payment issues internally before we move to the collection process. Our internal statements are sent out every 28 days, for over 3 months. If payment is not received within 3 months, or you have not contacted us to discuss your account, we may begin a collection process at that time.

Can I receive a discount if the balance I owe is part of my deductible or co-insurance? Or can NAPA accept insurance payment as payment in full?

NAPA is required by federal and state laws to balance bill patients for their deductible and co-insurance. If you are unable to pay due to financial hardship, please contact our Customer Service Department to discuss your account with us.

Was my claim submitted to insurance? I gave all my insurance info at the hospital.

If you provided accurate insurance information at the hospital then yes, we will submit a claim directly to your insurance carrier. If your insurance information is different from what you gave at the hospital, please contact NAPA's Customer Service Department and give us your updated information so that we can correct the claim.

Why didn't my insurance pay NAPA's charges in full? And how did NAPA determine what my co-pay or co-insurance is?

Depending on your specific plan, you may be subject to a co-pay, deductible and/or co-insurance. Your insurance carrier sends NAPA a statement called an Explanation of Benefits, which tells us what portion of your bill you are personally responsible for. If you have a question about your level of benefits, we suggest you contact your insurance carrier directly.

How much is my procedure going to cost if I am a private patient?

If you are a private (or self-pay) patient, please contact our Customer Service Department for an estimate of how much your anesthesia bill will be. We will need to know the following information: the facility you will be having the procedure at, the name of the procedure, and approximately how long your surgeon estimated the surgery will last.

What are NAPA's privacy practices?

Download a copy of NAPA's Notice of Privacy Practices.