

After anesthesia- caring for your child (Toddler and school age children)

Patient and Family education

This teaching contains general information. Talk to your child's doctor or a member of our healthcare team about specific care of your child

What is anesthesia?

Anesthesia is a kind of medicine that is given to put all or parts of the body to sleep. It is used when your child needs surgery or a procedure with sedation.

How do I care for my child after anesthesia?

The staff will talk with you about specific care for your child. You should follow the doctor's instructions. Some general guidelines to follow include:

- Stay with your child until he/she is completely awake and alert.
- Observe your child closely for the first hour after discharge and then every hour for the rest of the day.
- Place your child on his side while sleeping. This may help prevent problems if he or she vomits.
- Gently place your child's head to the side if he or she is sleeping while riding in a child safety seat or stroller.
- Keep the lights, activity, and noise levels low until your child is fully awake. This will help your child rest.
- Some children may become restless from anesthesia. Calm and reassure your child if this happens. This is temporary and should wear off within a few hours.
- Provide quiet indoor activities, such as coloring, reading or watching TV. Avoid activities that require balance or coordination, such as biking, swimming, and skating for 24hrs after surgery.
- Help your child climb stairs safely
- Give your child his favorite things, such as a blanket, stuffed animals, or favorite toy. These things will help comfort your child.

What can I give my child to eat and drink after anesthesia?

General guidelines for feeding your child after anesthesia are:

- Give your child clear liquids, such as juice, pedialyte, Gatorade or popsicles, until he or she is fully awake and alert or as the doctor instructed.
- Advance to your child's normal diet and feeding schedule when your child is fully awake and taking liquids without any vomiting.

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When should I call the doctor?

- Repeated vomiting (throws up more than 3 times within the first 4 hours after anesthesia)
- Has a fever 101.3°F or greater
- Is very restless or agitated and cannot be calmed down after a few hours.
- Is difficult to awaken or is not fully awake after 6 hours- you should be able to wake your child from sleeping. It is alright if your child goes back to sleep after awakening.

Call 911 **RIGHT AWAY** if your child has problems breathing.

Signs of breathing problems include:

- Is very hard to wake up
- Fast or shallow breathing
- Labored breathing (hard to breathe)
- Chest retractions (pulling in of the skin around the ribs and chest when breathing)
- A blue or purple color to the nail beds, lips or gums
- Wheezing or grunting
- Chest pain or tightness