



Post General Anesthesia Information: Children and Adults

Waking Up from Anesthesia

As people awaken from anesthesia there is a slow progression from an initial feeling of disorientation to a full regaining of awareness and coordination. Within the first 30 minutes the patient will achieve a reasonable level of alertness. Still, it will take hours for all traces of anesthesia to be metabolized and eliminated from the body. Therefore there will be a lingering "hangover effect" that will last through most of the day. Some patients have a sore throat or minor swallowing discomfort after general anesthesia. This is due to a breathing tube being placed in the patient's nose or throat for airway control during surgery. There may also be a "raspy" or "croupy" sound to the patient's voice. These symptoms should pass during the day.

Transportation Home

Patients may get "car sick" during the drive home. Be prepared to stop the car and aid the patient if there is any vomiting. All child patients should be transported in age appropriate car seats. Seat belts can be used for older children and adults. A post anesthesia patient is prone to dizziness or feeling faint. Be attentive and assist the patient when exiting the car and getting inside the house. Once at home the patient should rest in bed, on the sofa, or in a reclining chair for a few hours. During this recovery period the patient should take oral fluids to maintain hydration.

Home Care

Do not plan or permit any activities after the general anesthesia appointment. Plan on having the patient rest with a responsible adult around the house to monitor recovery.

Children: Children should be watched carefully. Their balance will be altered and they should be assisted whenever walking. As the day progresses and a responsible adult feels the child has regained more normal abilities they can start to resume regular activities. Restrict any unsupervised outdoor play for the day.

Adults: Ice can be applied on the face to help limit swelling and reduce pain. Patients should not drive a car for at least 24 hours after waking up from anesthesia. Nor should patients engage in any potentially dangerous activities such as operating electrical appliances or power tools. All patients should expect to have some dizzy spells for the day. If a patient is in the shower and feeling dizzy, have them sit down immediately before possibly losing consciousness.

Eating and Drinking

Children: A very sleepy child who may still have numb lips and / or tongue after general anesthesia should not have solid foods due to increased chance of choking or inhaling food into their lungs. Non-chewy, soft foods are more appropriate until the numbness wears off. Maintain hydration with fluids such as water, clear juices or Gatorade.

Adults: After surgery drink lots of liquids and maintain hydration. It is best to have soft foods only. Tissue near surgical sites will be tender and chewing solid foods can be uncomfortable. Avoid choking or possibly inhaling food into the lungs. You can begin normal foods the day after surgery, chewing on the most comfortable side if possible. Avoid hot liquids for at least a couple of days. Be aware while you are taking any prescribed pain medication that alcohol needs to be restricted totally.

Fever

Children: Children may run a slight fever up to 101° oral or rectal after general anesthesia. This is common and generally corrected by increasing oral fluid intake. If a fever goes over 101° give your child some Tylenol syrup and place an ice pack on the chest or abdomen. Notify our doctors if the fever persists.

Oral Hygiene

All patients should brush their teeth in a normal fashion after dental surgery. Try to avoid directly brushing extraction sites. Some tissue near the surgical sites may be tender for a few days. Soft brushes may be used. On the days following dental surgery a gentle rinsing can be done as well.

When To Call The Office / Doctors

Children: If your child develops a "croupy" cough or any respiratory difficulties, please call immediately. If you cannot reach us and your child appears in distress, please call 911 and ask for an ACLS ambulance.

Adults: If there is any nausea or vomiting, try drinking some warm chamomile tea. If vomiting persists for hours after trying the chamomile tea, call us. Prolonged symptoms should not be neglected. Should there be any surgical complications, please read the postoperative surgical instructions given to you.

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Dr. Robert Campbell 804-338-9003
Dr. Jeff Campbell 804-370-1129
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Dr. Navin Shetty 804-339-8969
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Discharge from the Office

Children: Small children are usually carried to the car. This requires a parent capable of doing so. It is best that no other children accompany the parents so it is easier to manage the patient. Carrying the child decreases the chances of motion sickness. An emesis cup will be given to you just in case. All children should be strapped into the age-appropriate car seat after discharge.

Adults: All patients must be discharged in a wheel chair for their own safety. Patients can have fainting spells when they stand up. This can also occur when leaving the car to go into the house. Biting on a gauze pack after surgery helps to decrease the chances of swallowing blood. Blood in the stomach is the most common cause of nausea and vomiting.

Phone Numbers

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