

WHAT IS SURGERY?

SURGERY BASICS



Surgery is a way to fix or look at part of your body while you are asleep with medicine called anesthesia. The anesthesia will make it so that you do not feel or remember any parts of your surgery. When your doctor is done with your surgery, they will stop giving you anesthesia and your body will wake up on its own.

STEP ONE

When you first arrive at the surgery center, your nurse will check your height, weight, and vitals, including your temperature and blood pressure. They will also check your pulse oximetry, or the amount of oxygen in your blood, using a clip on your finger. You will change into a hospital gown.



STEP TWO

Your nurse will talk to you and your caregiver about your medical history and why you are having surgery today. You will also meet your anesthesiologist, the doctor that will be giving you anesthesia during your surgery, and your surgeon, the doctor who will be doing your surgery or procedure.



STEP THREE

In order to get anesthesia, you will need to have an IV placed in your hand or arm. You can learn more about what it will be like to get an IV [here](#).



STEP FOUR

You, your caregiver, and your doctor may decide that it would help you to get medicine to feel more calm before you go to the operating room. Your doctor will put medicine through your IV that will help your body relax and will make you feel less nervous.



STEP FIVE

When it is your turn for surgery, your nurse and anesthesiologist will bring you, on your bed, to the operating room where you will have your surgery or procedure. You may notice a lot of doctors, nurses, and equipment in the room. Each of the doctors and nurses have a specific job to do to help take care of you. Not all of the equipment will be needed during your surgery.



STEP SIX

Your nurse will help you move to another bed in the operating room. They will place you on a monitor by putting stickers on your chest to look at your heart rate, a sticker on your finger to look at your oxygen levels, and a blood pressure cuff to check your blood pressure.



STEP SEVEN

Your anesthesiologist will begin giving you anesthesia through your IV. You may also have a mask blowing air near or on your face. During this medicated sleep, you will not feel, see, hear, or remember anything that happens during your surgery. Once your surgery is over, your anesthesiologist will stop giving you the anesthesia and you will wake up.



STEP EIGHT

You will wake up in the recovery room and there will be a nurse there taking care of you. She will ask if you are having any pain and may offer you something to eat or drink. Your caregiver will be brought to the recovery room to be with you. You may be ready to go home or you may be moved to an inpatient unit where you will have your own room to spend the night while your doctors and nurses continue to take care of you.



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While having surgery can be stressful, there are many ways to make the process easier.

Relax your body.

While it may seem difficult, keeping your body relaxed will help you feel calmer and less nervous. When you start to feel worried, try to:

- Take deep breaths, counting to 5 as you inhale and then counting to 5 as you exhale
- Listen to music or watch a video
- Imagine how your body feels when you are relaxed
 - Where are you?
 - What are you doing?
 - Who are you with?

Talk to your caregiver(s), doctors, and nurses.

Tell them what would make you the most comfortable and ask questions if you don't understand something. Think about these questions:

- Would you like a support person to sit next to you or hold your hand?
- Would you like a 1-2-3 countdown before the IV poke?