

Anesthesia and You

Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines and Mercy Medical Center – West Lakes are staffed by board-certified and board eligible physician anesthesiologists. Each member of the service is an individual practitioner with privileges to practice at Mercy.

What types of anesthesia are available?

Decisions about your anesthesia are made based on your needs. There are two types of anesthesia available:

- **General anesthesia:** provides loss of consciousness
- **Regional anesthesia:** involves the injection of a local anesthetic to provide numbness, loss of pain or loss of sensation to a large region of the body. Types of regional anesthesia include spinal blocks, epidural blocks and leg blocks. Medications may be given to relax you.

Your anesthesiologist will discuss the risks and benefits associated with the different anesthetic options, as well as any complications or side effects that can occur. The most common side effects of anesthesia include nausea and vomiting. We will give you medicine to calm these symptoms if needed after surgery.

During surgery, what does my anesthesiologist do?

Your anesthesiologist is responsible for your comfort and well being before, during and immediately after your surgery. In the operating room, the anesthesiologist will manage vital functions — including heart rate and rhythm, blood pressure, body temperature and breathing. The anesthesiologist is also responsible for fluid and blood replacement when necessary.

Can I choose an anesthesiologist?

Although most patients are assigned an anesthesiologist, you may choose one based on personal preference or insurance considerations. If you have questions about your insurance coverage or medical plan participation by the anesthesiologist, contact your insurance company for guidance.

Requests for specific anesthesiologists should be submitted in advance through your surgeon's office.