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Introduction

The following information is to help parents and/or guardians know what to expect during their child’s anesthetic experience. We hope it will help you feel better prepared, and more comfortable as you support your child through his/her surgery, or procedure. At any time during your child’s stay, feel free to ask questions or discuss your concerns with the California Pacific Medical Center staff.

When Will I Meet My Child’s Anesthesiologist?

- You will talk to your child’s anesthesiologist on the day of the surgery.

- Anesthesiologists at California Pacific Medical Center frequently allow one parent to be present in the Operating Room as his or her child receives anesthesia.

- Please let the anesthesiologist know if you would like to be present as your child goes to sleep. In some situations the anesthesiologist may need to decline your request, and he/she will discuss this with you.

- Parents are not permitted to remain in the Operating Room during surgery.

How Will My Child Receive Anesthesia?

Most children under the age of ten initially receive anesthesia by breathing a combination of anesthetic medications, and oxygen through a mask. After they are asleep, they may, or may not require an intravenous line (IV) through which they receive fluid, and additional anesthetic medications. Older children often initially receive anesthesia through an IV, as adults do. Your anesthesiologist will discuss these options with you and your child.
What is the Parents’ Role During the Start of Anesthesia?

We feel you are the best person to help your child feel calm and comfortable in this new situation.

Making a Plan With Your Child

- Talk with your child. Together, make a plan for what to do when he or she feels nervous. These are some ideas that frequently work:
  - Read a book.
  - Tell a story.
  - Take deep breaths.
  - Talk about something fun you like to do together.

- Remember to start the plan when you sense your child is becoming anxious.

- Stay calm; your child will take cues from you.

- Comfort and encourage your child, stay close, hold hands, respect their feelings. Let your child know he or she is doing a good job.

What You May Notice as Your Child Falls Asleep

- A change in your child’s breathing; it could become heavier or louder.

- Your child’s body becoming quite limp and relaxed with deeper sleep.

- Some movement by your child after initially relaxing. This is referred to as the “excitement phase.” It can be as subtle as hands tensing, or as active as both arms and legs moving vigorously. Your child is unaware this is happening, it will quickly pass.

- Only partial closure of your child’s eyes.

Note: All of the above are completely normal. The anesthesiologist will let you know when your child is asleep, and it is time for you to leave.
What is the Parents' Role During the Start of Anesthesia? (continued)

How Long Will It Take for My Child to Go to Sleep?

- Once the anesthesia mask is placed on your child's face, the delivery of anesthesia works best if continued without interruption until your child is asleep. It takes approximately 30 to 60 seconds to go to sleep breathing through the mask. If a child receives anesthesia through an IV, it takes less than 10 seconds to go to sleep.
- Once your child is asleep, a nurse will walk with you as you leave the Operating Room. Please understand you will need to leave quickly so the staff can focus on the care of your child.
- The nurse will direct you to the surgical waiting area.
- It is a good idea to eat something while your child is in surgery, especially if you have also been fasting. You will need your energy to help your child during the recovery period.

Will I Speak with the Surgeon after My Child's Surgery or Procedure is Completed?

- When your child's surgery or procedure is completed, the surgeon will speak with you. The surgeon will talk with you in the waiting room and then bring you into the Recovery Room.
- **Note: On the Pacific Campus** – Your name may be called by staff at the Information Desk in the designated waiting area in the Lobby of the main hospital at 2333 Buchanan Street. The staff member will direct you where to go to speak with the surgeon.

When Will I See My Child After His/Her Surgery or Procedure?

- Anesthesiologists at California Pacific Medical Center frequently allow parents to be with their child in the Recovery Room. At times, we are unable to immediately allow parents into the Recovery Room. Please know that we will make every effort to reunite you with your child as soon as possible.
- If your child is scheduled to go to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) on the California Campus, or the Critical Care Unit (CCU) on the Davies Campus, your child will go directly there and bypass the Recovery Room.
What Can Parents Expect in the Recovery Room/Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)?

What to Expect as Your Child Wakes Up From Anesthesia

- Each child wakes up differently. Some wake up quickly; others are slower to rouse. Either way is fine. How quickly children wake up is also affected by the length of surgery, and the types of medications used.

- Frequently children wake up disoriented. They are often crying and may be quite restless. Your child’s eyes may be open; but he or she may not be fully awake. This type of restlessness is very common and does not always mean your child is experiencing pain. Most children do not remember this transition period.

- If your child wakes up upset, it most likely will require several more minutes for the anesthesia to wear off. As this happens, children usually begin to relax. Sometimes pain or sedative medications are given to help calm your child even when he or she is not experiencing pain. The staff will be watching your child closely, assessing pain, and letting you know what is happening.

How Long Will My Child Be In the Recovery Room?

This depends on the type of surgery your child has, how much anesthesia was required, how quickly he or she wakes up, and what medications are given in the Recovery Room. Patients having very short surgeries (for example: ear tubes) usually stay between 15 and 30 minutes. The average length of stay is between 30 and 60 minutes.

Where Will My Child Go After the Recovery Room?

- From the Recovery Room your child will go to the Post-operative Unit. The length of stay in the Post-operative Unit is again determined by the type of surgery, and how your child is feeling.

- The nursing staff will monitor your child’s alertness, ability to eat and drink, and any continuing need for pain medication. Length of stay in the Post-operative Unit varies from 30 minutes to four (4) hours.

- Children requiring an overnight stay go to Pediatrics (California Campus) or Micro Med/Surg (Davies Campus).
More Ways to Learn

- Call (415) 600-0808 to attend the Pediatric Surgery Tour for Pediatric Surgery patients, or to speak to a Child Life Specialist. The 1-hour Pediatric Surgery Tour helps parents and their children become more familiar with the hospital environment before the day of surgery.

- Go to [www.cpmc.org/learning](http://www.cpmc.org/learning).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Can I be with my child in the Operating Room?</th>
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