

**Health
First**

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Types of Anesthesia and Their Side Effects

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There are several types anesthesia. Following is a review of each and their possible side effects.

General Anesthesia

General Anesthesia causes you to lose consciousness. While very safe, this type of anesthesia is most likely to cause side effects. These may include:

- **Nausea and vomiting** – You may experience this within the first few hours or within the days following surgery.
- **Sore throat** – This is often caused by a device, which is placed to help you breathe during surgery.
- **Postoperative delirium** – Confusion upon waking after surgery is not directly linked to general anesthesia. However, some people may feel disoriented and have problems remembering or focusing for as much as a week. In rare cases, mild long-term memory and learning problems can occur.
- **Muscle aches** – The medicine used to relax your muscles for surgery may cause soreness.
- **Itching** – This is a common side effect of narcotic pain medications.
- **Chills and shivering** – As many as 50 percent of patients experience this upon waking from anesthesia.

- **Malignant hyperthermia** – An extremely rare inherited genetic disorder can lead to a potentially deadly reaction. If you feel that you or a blood relative are susceptible, please notify your physician anesthesiologist.

Monitored Anesthesia Care or IV Sedation

Monitored Anesthesia Care or IV Sedation is used for procedures requiring patients to simply be sleepy and relaxed without being unconscious. This allows for a faster recovery with fewer side effects than general anesthesia.

Regional Anesthesia (Nerve Block) or Neuraxial Anesthesia (Spinal or Epidural)

Regional Anesthesia (Nerve Block) or Neuraxial Anesthesia (Spinal or Epidural) are types of anesthesia that involve an injection of numbing medicine into a specific body part or into the back to provide pain relief during and/or after surgery. Side effects are less common but may include:

- **Headache** – This may occur a few days after the procedure if spinal fluid leaks out when the anesthetic is delivered through the spine—as in an epidural or spinal block for childbirth.
- **Minor back pain** – Soreness may be felt at the site if a needle was inserted into the back.
- **Difficulty urinating** – It may be difficult to urinate for a short while after spinal anesthesia.
- **Nerve irritation or injury** – This rarely occurs, and usually only causes temporary symptoms.

A physician anesthesiologist will be available to address any questions you may have about the type of anesthesia for your procedure.