Anesthesia is the use of drugs to prevent pain during surgery or other medical procedures. Sedation is the use of drugs to relax you and may be used with anesthesia.

### What is anesthesia?
Anesthesia produces a loss of feeling to a specific region of the body. A shot is given to numb the area that requires surgery.

### Types of anesthesia

- **Local**
  - Produces a loss of feeling to a small, specific area of the body. A shot is given to numb the area.

- **Regional**
  - Produces a loss of feeling to a specific region of the body. A shot is given to numb the area that requires surgery.

- **General**
  - Affects the entire body. You have no awareness or feeling. You may breathe gases or vapors through a mask or tube. Drugs may also be given through an intravenous (IV) tube in your vein.

### Effects of sedation

- **Relaxed and awake.** You can answer questions and follow directions.
- **Relaxed and drowsy.** You may sleep through much of the procedure. You may hear sounds and voices around you. You can be easily awakened when spoken to or touched.
- **Drowsy to lightly sleeping.** You may have little or no memory of the procedure. Your breathing slows and you may be given oxygen. You may sleep until the drugs wear off.

### Before surgery or a procedure
- Ask a friend or relative to be your advocate. They can help remember questions, write down answers, and remind you about directions.
- Arrange to take off work and other activities.
- Have someone care for your small children.
- An anesthesia professional will talk to you. This could be a physician anesthesiologist, a nurse anesthetist or an anesthesiologist assistant.
- Ask the anesthesia professional about the benefits and risks of anesthesia.
- Follow instructions for eating, drinking and taking medicines, especially instructions for when not to eat or drink.

### After surgery or a procedure
You may feel sleepy. The drugs can stay in your body for up to 24 hours. Remember, it is important to follow the instructions provided after the procedure.

- **Do:**
  - Speak up if you have any questions
  - Ask for written instructions. Know what signs should cause you to call the doctor.
  - Ask how to contact someone in an emergency
  - Ask what medicines you should or should not take
  - Have a friend or family member take you home
  - Take liquids first and slowly progress to a light meal
  - Take it easy until you feel back to normal

- **Don’t:**
  - Drive a car, operate equipment or drink alcohol for at least 24 hours
  - Make any important decisions or sign any legal documents until you recover
  - Go back to your regular activities, such as work and exercise, until your doctor says it’s OK

### Resources
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists: www.aana.com
American Society of Anesthesiologists: www.asahq.org

The goal of Speak Up™ is to help patients become active in their care.