

After anesthesia – Caring for your baby (Newborn to 1 year)

What is anesthesia?

Anesthesia is a type of medicine that is given to keep people comfortable and/or asleep during a test, procedure or surgery.

How do I care for my baby after anesthesia?

A member of the care team will explain the doctor's instructions. Some guidelines to follow include:

- Until fully awake:
 - Stay with your baby.
 - Place your baby's head to the side if they are sleeping when you buckle them into a child safety seat or stroller.
 - Keep the lights, activity and noise levels low. This will help your baby rest.
- Watch your baby closely:
 - For the first hour after going home and then every hour for the rest of the day.
 - When playing, sitting up or crawling.
- Some babies may become restless from the anesthesia.
Calm and reassure your baby if this happens. This should wear off within a few hours.
- Give your baby their favorite things to help comfort them. This might include a pacifier, blanket, stuffed animal or toy.
- Your baby should wet the diaper every 4 to 6 hours. This shows that they are getting enough fluids.



What can I give my baby to drink and eat after anesthesia?

A member of the care team will explain the doctor's instructions. Some guidelines to follow include:

- Wait to offer drinks and food until you get home.
- Feed your baby when they are awake and able to suck. Start with clear liquids, such as juice, Pedialyte, Gatorade, popsicles or breast milk.
- **Do not** prop your baby's bottle.
- **Never** give plain water to babies younger than 6 months old.
- Advance to your baby's normal diet and feeding schedule when your baby:
 - Is fully awake.
 - Can drink liquids without vomiting (throwing up).
- If your baby goes back to sleep at home, wake them to drink and eat to avoid dehydration.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

After anesthesia - caring for your baby, continued

How can I keep my baby safe after anesthesia?

Your baby may not have normal balance and coordination for up to 24 hours after anesthesia. Until they return to normal:

- Your baby should not do anything where they will need strength and balance. This might include pulling themselves up to stand and using climbing toys.
- Help your baby while they stand, crawl and walk.
- Avoid loud activities. Encourage quiet activities instead. This might include looking at books and playing with toys on the floor.
- Offer extra head support when you carry and play with your baby.



When should I call my baby's doctor?

Call the doctor if your baby:

- Keeps throwing up (throws up more than 3 times within the first 4 hours after anesthesia).
- Is 12 months or younger and has not had a wet diaper in 6 hours.
- Is older than 12 months and has not had a wet diaper in 8 hours.
- Has a fever of 101.3°F or higher.
- Is very restless or agitated and cannot be calmed after a few hours.
- Is hard to wake up or is not fully awake after 6 hours. You should be able to wake your baby. It is OK if your baby goes back to sleep again after you wake them.

Call your baby's doctor if you have any questions or concerns about how your baby looks or feels.

When should I call 911?

Call 911 **right away** if your baby has signs of breathing problems. This might include:

- Fast or shallow breathing
- Labored breathing (hard to breathe)
- Chest retractions (skin pulls in around the ribs and chest when breathing)
- A blue or dark purple color to the nails, lips or gums
- Wheezing or grunting

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

After anesthesia - caring for your baby, continued

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.