# After Anesthesia - Caring for Your Teen

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Patient and Family Education

### What is anesthesia?

Anesthesia is a kind of medicine that is given to put all or parts of the body to sleep.

### How do I care for my teen after anesthesia?

The staff will talk with you about specific care for your teen. You should follow your child's doctor's instructions in caring for your teenager. Some general guidelines to follow may include:

- Stay with your teen until he is completely awake and alert.
- Keep the lights, activity and noise levels low until your teen is fully awake. This will help him rest.
- Some teens may become restless from the anesthesia. Calm and reassure your teen if this happens. This is temporary and should wear off within a few hours.
- Provide quiet indoor activities such as listening to music, reading or watching TV.
- Your teen should avoid activities that require balance and coordination such as biking, swimming and skating for 24 hours after surgery.
- Do not leave your teen at home alone for the next 24 hours.
- Your teen should not resume sports until his doctor tells you it's okay.
- Your teen may not drive for the next 24 hours.

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

You should follow your child's doctor's directions about food and liquids. Some general guidelines for feeding your teen after anesthesia are:

- Give clear liquids such as juice, Pedialyte®, Gatorade® or Popsicles® until he is fully awake and alert or as his doctor instructs.
- Advance to a normal diet once he is fully awake, alert and taking liquids without vomiting.

### How do I care for a teen with special needs?

- Your teen may need more help than usual for the next 24 hours.
- Help your teen with his adaptive equipment, such as a wheelchair or walker.

### When should I call my child's doctor?

Call your child's doctor if he:

- Has repeated vomiting (throws up more than three times within the first 4 hours after anesthesia)
- Has a fever of 101°F or greater
- Is very restless or agitated and cannot be calmed after a few hours
- Is difficult to awaken or is not fully awake after 6 hours – you should be able to awaken your child from his sleep. It is all right if your child goes back to sleep after he awakens
- You have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels

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

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child.

**Call 911 or your local ambulance service right away if your child has problems breathing.**
Signs of breathing problems may include:

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

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.**
This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child.