

Dental General Anesthesia

Q: What is general anesthesia?

A: General anesthesia is a management technique that uses medications to cause the child to become unconscious and asleep while receiving dental care. It is provided by a physician or dentist who has special training in anesthesia.

Q: Who should receive dental care with general anesthesia?

A: Children with severe anxiety and/or inability to cooperate are candidates for general anesthesia. These children may be young or have compromised health or special needs. They usually require extensive dental treatment and their anxiety cannot be controlled with conscious sedation techniques.

Q: Is general anesthesia safe?

A: Although there is some risk associated with general anesthesia, it is safe when administered by an appropriately trained individual in an appropriately equipped facility. Many precautions are taken to provide safety for the child during general anesthesia care. Patients are monitored closely during the general anesthesia procedure by personnel who are trained to manage complications. Your pediatric dentist will discuss the benefits and risks involved in general anesthesia and why it is recommended for your child.

Q: What special considerations are associated with the general anesthesia appointment?

A: A physical examination is required prior to general anesthesia for dental care. This physical examination provides information to ensure the safety of the general anesthesia procedure. Your pediatric dentist and/or your general anesthesia provider will advise you about evaluation appointments that are required.

Parents are instructed to report to the pediatric dentist any illness that occurs prior to the general anesthesia appointment. It may be necessary to reschedule the appointment. It is very important to follow instructions regarding preoperative fasting from fluids and foods.

Usually patients are tired following general anesthesia. Your child will be discharged when alert and ready to depart. You will be instructed to let the child rest at home with minimal activity planned until the next day. Post-operative dietary recommendations will also be given.