



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## ASPAN Patient Information:

### What to Expect in the Operating Room

#### **What do I expect in the Operating Room?**

How the operating room is set up is different in each facility, but once you arrive in the operating room, you will notice that it is a very busy area. You will also notice that everyone is dressed the same way. Do not be alarmed! When it is time for surgery to begin, you will be taken to the operating room either by walking with a nurse or by being wheeled on a stretcher. You may notice bright lights, instruments, and the entire area/room is extremely clean. We call it “sterile.” You will notice the operating room team members putting masks on their faces as they enter the operating room to keep the room free of germs.

#### **Will I remain on the stretch for surgery?**

No. The nurse will help you move onto the operating table, which will feel hard and sometimes cold. Since the operating room table is narrow, a safety strap will be placed across your lap, thighs or legs. Your arms are placed and secured on padded arm boards to help keep them from falling off the table.

#### **What questions will they ask me?**

The same questions asked of you while you were prepared for your surgery will be asked once more for your safe care. These questions include such things as your name, whether you have any allergies, when you last had something to eat or drink, what type of procedure you are having, and the name of your surgeon.

#### **What will the anesthesiologist do?**

A nurse anesthetist or the anesthesiologist will attach a blood pressure cuff, ECG leads (sticky pads with little “nubs” on the end that will be used to monitor your heart during surgery), and a pulse oximeter (a plastic clip attached to your fingertip and used to measure the amount of oxygen in your blood during surgery). If you are receiving a general anesthetic, you may be given a mask and asked to breathe deeply. The nurse anesthetist or anesthesiologist may inject anesthetic into your IV to relax you and make you comfortable. Some patients report the medication burns slightly or feels “tight” at the site of the intravenous.

#### **What is a time out?**

A “pause” or “time out” will take place just before starting your surgery by everyone that is in the operating room with you. This is final proof that everyone agrees they have the correct patient, procedure, site, side, position and that they have all the correct equipment needed.

#### **How long will I be in surgery?**

The amount of time in the operating room will depend on the type of surgery you are having. The surgeon can give an estimate time before you are taken back to the operating room. The whole team will be in the operating room to help your surgeon provide you with the best care and make sure you are safe and comfortable during your surgery.

**Will my family receive updates while I am in the operating room?**

While you are having your surgery, your family may receive updates on the progress of your surgery. Once your surgery is complete, the surgeon will go and talk with your family. The anesthesia provider will see you awaken safely and take you to the postanesthesia care unit (PACU).