



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

ASPAN Patient Information:

What to Expect in the Postanesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

Where do I go after surgery?

Right after surgery, you will be taken to the postanesthesia care unit (PACU) or directly to the intensive care unit where nurses will take care of you and watch you closely. A nurse will check your temperature, blood pressure and pulse often, look at your bandages, regulate your IV and give you pain medication as you need it.

What do I need to tell the PACU nurse?

Please tell the nurse if you are having pain. The nurse will ask you to give your pain a number on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning you have no pain, and 10 you have the worst pain. The nurse will check your pain and continue to help you manage it until you are as comfortable as possible.

What do I need to do with my nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)?

Some patients feel very sick to their stomach (nausea). It is important to tell your nurse about it right away, so it can be treated with medication. If you have had problems with nausea in the past, the anesthesia care provider knows this before surgery.

What other feelings may I experience after surgery?

You may feel sleepy, dizzy and/or forgetful from the medication given to you during your surgery.

When will I see my family after surgery?

The facility determines visitation in the PACU. Check with the nursing staff to find out if your family will be allowed to visit you.

What type of information do I need to know before going home?

If you are going home that same day, you will be given printed discharge instructions for your care at home. The nursing staff will go over all the information with you and a family member or friend. Your instructions will include:

- Activity restrictions
- Diet
- Pain medication
- Follow up instructions with your surgeon
- Signs to watch for if you need to call the doctor

You might be given a prescription depending on your doctor's orders and what kind of surgery you had done.