



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

ASPAN Patient Information:

Pre-anesthetic Interview/Testing

What do I need to do to prepare for my pre-anesthetics interview and tests?

You have met your surgeon and are now scheduled for surgery. Before you have your surgery, patients are asked to give some general health information, which includes: any allergies, medications, and medical history. Some patients have their interview over the phone, while some are asked to come to the hospital or same day surgery center. Whether you get a phone call or go in for your interview, this is a good time for you to ask questions about getting ready for surgery or discuss any special needs you may have. When the nurse tries to schedule your appointment, he or she may NOT leave a message on your cell phone or answering machine, if you are not there to take the phone call. This is to protect your privacy.

Why is it important that I am interviewed?

A nurse or an anesthesia provider will be the person who will interview you. The goal of this interview is to talk about any possible risks to you before you receive the anesthesia and also to discuss which type of anesthesia you will be given. An anesthesia evaluation will be completed. It is very important that you give all-important information about your health history and family history, including any problems with anesthesia and allergies.

What kind of testing can I expect?

Depending on your age, physical condition and/or procedure, your doctor may order one or more of the following tests:

- blood testing
- chest x-ray
- electro cardiogram (heart)
- respiratory testing (lungs/breathing)
- woman: pregnancy test

There are some patients who may be asked to see another specialist in order to be safer with the stress of surgery and anesthesia. These specialists may include a cardiologist or internist.

Can I continue taking all of medicines before surgery?

You will be asked to let the doctors and nurses know all the different types of medicines, vitamins and herbals you are taking, why you are taking them, the amount you take and at what time you take them. You will also need to let the staff know if you take any recreational drugs, use tobacco, and if you drink alcohol. Any medication or food allergies are important for the nurse and doctor to know.

There are certain medications that should be stopped before having surgery. The nurse may ask you to stop any blood thinning medications like aspirin, naproxen, ibuprofen, coumadin, and herbals.

What do I need to know about my history of smoking? Will smoking cause problems with my surgery?

Cigarette smoking can cause possible postoperative problems. Smoking may slow down the healing of surgical wounds and bones. While it can take a long time to achieve the most benefits from not smoking, brief periods of not smoking at all before surgery can help you. (Visit www.smokefree.gov for more information.)

What important papers should I bring, if I need to bring any?

Advance Directives (“Living Will” or a “Power of Attorney for Health Care”) are not required, but if you have them, you should bring them.

Living Will - advance directive: you give direction to your health care providers about your future treatment choices, should you be unable to express your wishes

Power of Attorney for Health Care - advance directive: you direct another individual to speak on your behalf, should you be unable to express your wishes

What should I do the morning of my surgery?

You will be instructed what medicines to take the day of surgery, any special supplies/ equipment to bring with you. You will also be told what time you need to stop eating and drinking. There are certain surgeries that require special preparations the day before, and you may even need to only drink clear fluids.

It is very important for you to talk honestly with your nurses, doctors and other staff members. It is also important for you to take part in your treatment choices, promote your own safety by knowing what is going on during your stay, and remain actively involved in your care.

You should feel comfortable about how to prepare for the day of surgery, know what to do when you arrive at the building for your procedure, and have an understanding of what to do before returning home at the end of your interview/appointment.