

After General Anesthetic

How will I feel after general anesthetic?

You may feel some pain or have an upset stomach or nausea for a few hours to a few days after surgery. The amount of pain, discomfort or nausea is different for each person. If you have these feelings, tell your nurse before you become uncomfortable. Your nurse can give you medications to help.

If you had laparoscopic surgery, you may have some abdominal pain from muscle spasms or shoulder pain caused by gas put into your abdomen. Walking and taking pain control medication can help.

What should I do when I go home?

Arrange for someone to drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours.

You must not drive, operate machinery, drink alcohol, use appliances that could cause injury, or make major decisions for 24 hours.

After General Anesthetic and Surgery

If you have a prescription to fill:

- The person picking you up can fill it at the pharmacy in the main lobby before you go home
- Drop it off at your drug store on the way home and have it delivered

What can I eat?

Drink a lot of fluids unless you have been advised not to. Begin with clear soups, tea, apple juice, non-carbonated drinks and gelatin. You are drinking enough fluid if you are passing urine every 3 to 4 hours. You can increase the food you eat as you feel better.

Pain control medication may cause constipation. Walking, drinking fluids and eating foods high in fibre such as fruit, vegetables and whole-grain products help prevent constipation. If you have questions about your diet or constipation, contact your family doctor or health care provider.

How do I manage pain or nausea at home?

Take your medication as advised by your doctor or health care provider. You should have less pain or nausea each day. Do not take any medication your doctor or health care provider has not advised you to take. Avoid drinking alcohol when you take pain control medication.

What about rest and activity?

Rest when you get home. It takes 1 to 2 days to start feeling better after general anesthetic. Your body takes several weeks or months to heal depending on the type of surgery you had. Avoid strenuous activities and follow your health care provider's advice as you heal.

Talk to your doctor about when you can:

- drive
- exercise
- do heavy lifting
- return to work

Your doctor will also tell you how to care for yourself after surgery.

Call your surgeon if you have:

- increased swelling or redness around any incision
- bleeding, drainage or a foul smell around any incision
- a fever greater than 38°C or 100°F
- pain that is not controlled by pain control medication

