

ASA Explains How Patients Can Make Surgery Safer



According to studies conducted by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), most people are unaware of the role the physician anaesthesiologist has in taking care of patients before, during and after surgery. While surgery and anaesthesia are safer than ever, most patients do not know about the steps they can take to make their experience safer and more comfortable.

"Patients know that the physician anaesthesiologist 'puts them to sleep' before surgery but they know little about the medical care and services we provide," says ASA President J.P. Abenstein, MSEE, MD.

One of the most important things patients can do to make surgery as safe as possible, Dr. Abenstein explains, is to have a detailed conversation with their physician anaesthesiologist before any surgery or procedure. "We encourage everyone to learn more about the importance of asking questions and sharing information about their lifestyle, health, family history and even their fears about anaesthesia and surgery before any procedure," Dr. Abenstein continues.

In conjunction with Physician Anaesthesiologists Week 2015 (11 to 17 January), ASA shares the following tips for a safe surgery and anaesthesia experience.

- **Know who will be administering your anaesthesia:** Your anaesthesia care team should be led by a physician anaesthesiologist, a medical doctor specialising in anaesthesia, pain and critical care medicine. This medical specialist works with your surgeon and other healthcare workers to develop and administer your anaesthesia care plan.
- **Meet with your physician anaesthesiologist:** During this meeting, provide detailed information about your health and lifestyle because certain medical conditions and lifestyle habits can make a difference, and your physician anaesthesiologist can adjust your care plan accordingly. Do you have diabetes, lung problems, kidney disease or allergies? What medications do you take, including over-the-counter and herbal/natural medications?

Have you or your family ever had a bad reaction to anaesthesia or pain medication, even years ago?
Even things that may seem minor can be important. Do you smoke? Do you snore? Are you sedentary?
How far can you walk?

- **Are you afraid? Do not be afraid to say so.** It is natural to fear surgery and anaesthesia, and your physician anaesthesiologist can give you information to put your mind at ease. Feeling safe is critical to having a positive and safe surgery experience.
- **Come prepared and ask any questions that may be on your mind:** Be sure to ask about the credentials and experience of your care team. Also ask for any and all details you want about the procedure and the anaesthesia.
- **Discuss your recovery:** Your anaesthesia care team continues to care for you even after your surgery. Ask about how your pain will be managed after your procedure and any concerns you have about recovery, returning home and getting back to your normal routine.

Source: [American Society of Anesthesiologists \(ASA\)](#)

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