

Comprehensive Dental Care Using General Anesthesia

This handout provides the information you need to make an informed choice about having general anesthesia to complete your dental care. It also describes the process for having this done at UWMC.

Please read this handout carefully and save it to refer to later. If you have any questions, call Advanced General Dentistry at 206-543-1511.

Scheduling Your Care

General anesthesia (GA) dental care at University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) is done on some Wednesdays on an outpatient basis. We are able to use the operating room for this service only about 50 times a year. The demand for this service is much greater than that.

If you choose to have this type of dental care, you **must** keep all your appointments as scheduled. If you miss any appointments, we may have to put you back on the waiting list. Our current wait time is about 9 to 12 months.

On the Day of Your Surgery

We usually treat 2 patients a day. Here are general timelines, depending on whether you are the 1st or 2nd patient of the day:

If you are the 1st patient of the day:

- You will need to arrive very early in the morning.
- The 1st dental procedure starts when the anesthesiologists are ready. The timing varies, as they sometimes have to do short urgent medical procedures before beginning the dental procedures. Please bring a book and be prepared to wait if needed. The 1st dental procedure usually starts between 8 and 10 a.m.



We will take a full set of mouth X-rays before your surgery.

If you are the 2nd patient of the day:

- You will come in the late morning, usually at 11:30 a.m.
- Your procedure will start only after the 1st procedure is done and the room has been cleaned and prepared. This means that your procedure may not start until several hours after you arrive.

- Please be patient and bring a book to read or something else to do. We will start your procedure as soon as possible.

Usually, you will receive your dental care and go home later in the afternoon or evening of the same day. We will keep you overnight only if there are medical reasons for doing so. You must have someone to help you in your home for the first 24 hours after surgery.

We will do our best to complete all of your dental treatment during your surgery. We usually:

- Take a full set of mouth X-rays
- Do a thorough head and neck exam
- Check for cavities
- Check your *periodontal* (gum) health
- Clean your teeth

After that, we will do whatever other dental treatment you need.

Dental treatments such as root canals, preparing teeth for crowns, pulling teeth, and making impressions for dentures can be done during your treatment. Procedures such as crowns and dentures that require lab work will not be finished on the same day. Your doctor will tell you when to come back.

You may be able to have other medical exams done while you are asleep. If you are due to have other exams, please ask your primary care doctor about this.

Financial Information

For patients who pay for their own medical care or have private insurance, we require a deposit for the general anesthesia before we set the surgery date. Full payment for the proposed dental treatment is required at your clinic visit before surgery. UWMC will bill your insurance carrier(s) for the services you receive. You will be reimbursed for any overpayments.

For Patients with DSHS Coverage

We will provide only dental treatments that are covered by DSHS unless you agree to pay for these treatments yourself. You will need to pay in advance for any procedures that DSHS does not cover.

Please also note that we can do more complex procedures while you are asleep, but the cost of anesthesia will not be covered if DSHS has not agreed to pay for these procedures. If you have any questions, please talk with the dentist and our Patient Care Coordinator before your surgery.

Preparing for Surgery

Consultation

On the day of your consultation visit, we will place your name on the waiting list. We will also contact your insurance company, if needed.

Scheduling and Payment

If you have any questions about your payment or your surgery date, please call 206-543-1511.

Pre-operative Visit

About 2 to 3 weeks before your surgery, you must return to the Advanced General Dentistry Clinic for your pre-operative visit. **You MUST have this visit before you can have surgery at the medical center.** At this visit:

- You will meet with the dental resident, dental attending doctor, and possibly our internal medicine consultant. They will ask you about your medical history and give you a physical exam. This visit is an important part of our teaching program. It will last about 2 hours.
- After that, you may need to go to the Pre-Anesthesia Clinic to meet with the nurses and a member of the anesthesiology team.
- Depending on what tests are needed, you may also have blood tests, EKGs, or chest X-rays.

Consent Before Treatment

You must read and sign a consent form that gives us permission to give you anesthesia and do your dental work. If you are under 18 years old or cannot sign this form, a legal guardian must sign it for you. This person is responsible for any decisions about your treatment.

Consent During Treatment

Before your surgery, we will take X-rays and gather other information to help us decide what treatment you need. But, we may find other issues while we are treating your teeth, after you are already asleep.

Since you will not be able to give consent for other treatments after your surgery has begun, **you MUST have your legal representative present at the hospital all day on the day of your surgery.** This person may need to make decisions about your treatment while you are asleep.

If we have any questions or need to make new decisions about your treatment, we will talk with your representative right away. We will treat you based on their consent.

1 Week Before Surgery

If your general health changes before your scheduled treatment, please call 206-543-1511 as soon as possible. Tell us if you have a fever, cold, cough, or other symptoms. We will decide if we need to reschedule your surgery.

The Night Before Surgery

- Do **not** eat or drink *anything* after midnight. Get a good night's sleep.
- If your doctor has told you to take medicines in the morning, take them with **only** a sip of water.
- If you have diabetes or are taking any *anticoagulation* medicines (blood-thinners such as Coumadin or aspirin), follow your doctor's instructions about your medicines for these conditions.

Day of Surgery

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and comfortable shoes (no heels). You may need to change into a hospital gown. (If a special-needs patient resists changing, we will not force them to.)
- Do **not** wear makeup, perfume, cologne, other scented products, hair decorations, or nail polish.
- Leave all valuables at home.
- Be sure your legal representative is prepared to stay all day and will drive you home.
- Bring a book, crossword puzzles, or other quiet things to do, since the wait time can be long.

At the Hospital

- Park in the Surgery Pavilion parking garage. A map is attached.
- Go to the Surgery Reception area on the 2nd floor of the Surgery Pavilion at your scheduled time.

After Your Surgery

- You will stay in our recovery room for about 1 hour after your surgery. Then you will be taken back to the Pavilion to get ready to go home. Recovery may take 1 to 4 hours or longer.
- If your surgery takes longer or is more complicated than expected:
 - You may need to stay overnight in the hospital.
 - Rarely, we may need to cancel your procedure and reschedule.

- A responsible adult **must** drive you home **and** be with you for at least 24 hours after your procedure. You will not be allowed to drive a car or ride in a taxi or bus after your surgery.

Self-care at Home

- You will receive a handout about self-care after surgery.
- Follow your doctor's instructions about diet, rest, and medicines.
- For 24 hours after your surgery, do **not**:
 - Drive
 - Sign important papers
 - Drink alcohol
 - Use machinery
 - Be responsible for the care of another person

Who to Call

Call one of the numbers below if you have any questions about follow-up care after your surgery:

- Monday through Thursday from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call 206-543-1511.
- After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for your primary care doctor or the Dental Resident on call to be paged.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Advanced General Dentistry:
206-543-1511