



NORTHSIDE

ANESTHESIOLOGY CONSULTANTS

AND PAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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WE PROVIDE  
STATE-OF-THE-ART CARE  
IN SURGICAL AND OBSTETRICAL  
ANESTHESIA AND PAIN MANAGEMENT.

## **ANESTHESIA AT NORTHSIDE**

Anesthesiology services at Northside Hospital and its associated sites are provided by Northside Anesthesiology Consultants, LLC, an anesthesiology practice consisting of over 35 physicians and over 70 anesthesiologists. Northside Anesthesiology Consultants provides state of the art care in surgical and obstetric anesthesia and pain management using the Anesthesia Care Team concept.

### **WHAT IS THE ANESTHESIA CARE TEAM ?**

The care team consists of anesthesiologists and anesthesiologists who work together to provide quality medical care during surgery as well as safe and effective relief from pain during your postoperative hospital stay. Northside Anesthesiology Consultants engages Physician Assistants and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologists as anesthesiologists.

An anesthesiologist interviews all patients pre-operatively to discuss the most appropriate anesthetic management for you, the patient; the final decision will be based on your general health, the type and duration of your surgery and your preference. During your surgery, a member of the care team will be with you at all times to monitor your comfort and safety.

### **THE RISKS OF ANESTHESIA**

As with all medical procedures, anesthesia has inherent risks. Prior to surgery, you will be asked to read and sign an "informed consent" document detailing these risks. Advancements in anesthesiology have made serious risks quite rare. The care team is constantly monitoring your condition throughout surgery, and is prepared to

deal with anesthetic problems should they arise. You can help us in providing the safest anesthetic possible by simply following the instructions you are given, and providing an accurate medical history including any previous problems with anesthesia.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN THE POST-ANESTHESIA CARE UNIT?

At the completion of surgery, you will be taken to the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit or PACU (formerly Recovery Room) to allow your anesthetic to significantly “wear off” while specially trained nurses monitor your progress, and make you as comfortable as possible. Your anesthesiologist is responsible for your comfort and safety in the PACU and directs the nurses in the provision of your care. If your surgical procedure is performed as an outpatient, your anesthesiologist is the physician who determines when you are ready to be discharged. **Please remember that you should make advance arrangements for transportation home following your outpatient surgery.** As a routine matter, a PACU nurse will place a telephone call to you the next day to check your progress.



## TYPES OF AVAILABLE ANESTHESIA

**General anesthesia** or “going to sleep”, involves the administration of a medication (usually intravenously) that causes you to become unconscious and pain free from the start of the anesthetic to the completion of surgery. Additional intravenous medications and anesthetic gases are administered during surgery to ensure you remain unconscious and pain free.

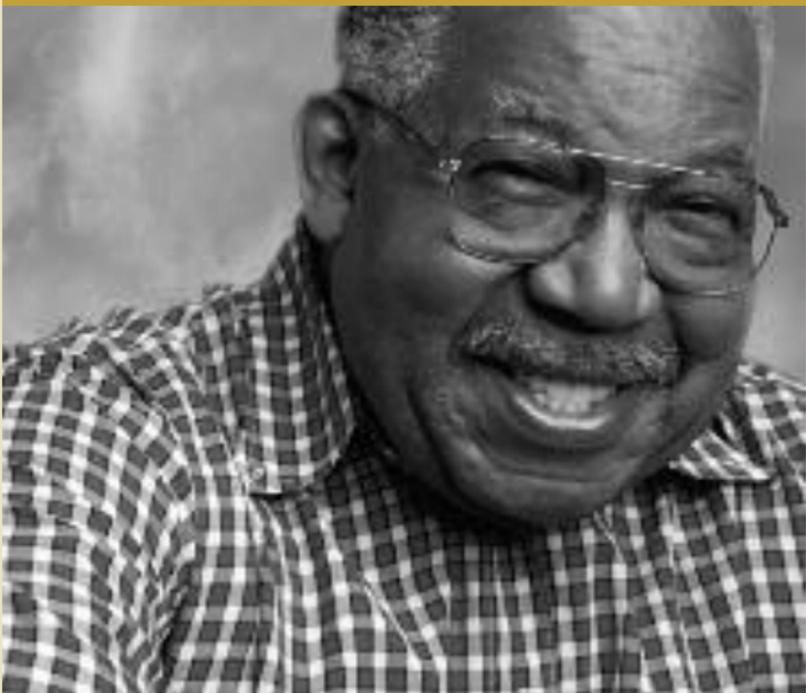
**Regional anesthesia** involves making a portion of your body insensitive to pain by temporarily “blocking” large groups of nerves or the spinal cord by the injection of local anesthetics. These may include spinal, or epidural anesthesia, which anesthetize the body up to the chest, and axillary blocks which anesthetize your entire arm. Patients receiving regional anesthesia generally receive intravenous sedation also, so they can rest throughout the operation with less anxiety and awareness.

**Monitored anesthesia (MAC)** is intravenous sedation or other medications administered by a member of the anesthesia care team as needed during a procedure. A member of the care team will remain with you throughout the procedure to monitor your comfort and safety.

## WHAT ABOUT MY POSTOPERATIVE PAIN ?

In the past, postoperative pain was treated by intra-muscular injections or pills. Now, if you and your surgeon desire, members of the Northside anesthesia care team including specially trained acute pain nurses will manage your pain after surgery. We make use of the latest technological advances, which include:

**Patient controlled analgesia (PCA)** utilizes a computerized pump to administer pain medications directly



to the patient through IV infusion. By pressing a button, you, the patient, are able to self-administer controlled amounts of medication. To maximize comfort and prevent over-dosage, the single and total doses of medication delivered are determined by the pain management service anesthesiologist based on your individual health and needs.

**Epidural fentanyl analgesia** is the most advanced form of pain relief currently available. Under local anesthesia, a small plastic catheter is inserted into the epidural space which is outside the spinal canal in your back. After surgery, a computerized pump infuses a mixture of narcotic and local anesthetic through the catheter; these medications “block” the pain signals from the region of surgery, providing a superior quality of pain relief. Epidural analgesia can be used to control pain after thoracic, abdominal, or lower extremity surgery.

At Northside, many surgeons and obstetricians prefer that the anesthesia care team provide pain management services for their patients. We believe this is because of our expertise and extensive experience in this specialized area of medicine. These services include:

- Initial consultation regarding pain management options
- Determination of appropriate narcotic and pump settings
- In-house availability around the clock to troubleshoot any problems that may arise
- Daily bedside visits by the pain management service to check the continued effectiveness of the therapy.

**IMPORTANT:** If your surgeon or obstetrician requests that we manage your pain after surgery, we are obligated to do so. We do not initiate this service on our own. You should be aware that some insurers may refuse to reimburse for this service and payment of the fee may become the patient's responsibility. Please see "What About My Bill" later in this pamphlet for a more in-depth discussion of our billing/collecting policies.

## WHAT OTHER SERVICES ARE OFFERED BY NORTHSIDE ANESTHESIOLOGY CONSULTANTS ?

**Obstetric anesthesia services** offer today's mothers a variety of pain management options to make labor and delivery as comfortable and safe as possible for both mother and baby. Because each woman's labor is unique to her, pain management is individualized after discussion between the patient, her obstetrician and anesthesiologist. Please discuss your anesthetic questions with your obstetrician, who can arrange a free consultation with one of our anesthesiologists.

**Pain management services** are provided at Northside's Pain Treatment Center locations by our anesthesiologists specializing in chronic pain management.



These anesthesiologists practice the latest in pain control technologies. Multidisciplinary team options for complex problems developing from prolonged pain may include psychological testing/counseling, physical and occupational therapy, and functional capacity evaluation/work hardening evaluation. For more information, please call (404) 459-1838.

#### WHAT ABOUT MY BILL ?

The anesthesiologists and anesthesiologists providing your care are private practitioners just like your surgeon or obstetrician; therefore, **you will receive a separate bill for these professional services.** As physicians independent of Northside Hospital, Northside Anesthesiology Consultant's "participation" status with HMOs, PPOs and other third party payor organizations may be different from the Hospital and your surgeon/obstetrician. We attempt to stay contracted with the same payors contracted with Northside Hospital but cannot guarantee this. Please consider this carefully prior to your surgery or delivery.

Northside Anesthesiology Consultant's professional fee includes a preoperative evaluation, administration of your anesthetic and supervision of your PACU stay. Since many factors influence the amount of your anesthesia bill (type and length of surgery, and your physical condition), only an estimate of the final bill can be determined by our billing office prior to surgery. The type of anesthesia administered during your surgery will not affect your anesthesia bill. The "anesthesia" charge on your hospital bill is for hospital furnished supplies and equipment, and does not include the charge for our professional services which are billed separately.

For the vast majority of patients, we are able to file claims directly to the insurance company, or other third party payor. In order for us to file your claim, it is necessary for you to provide complete insurance information to the Hospital when you are admitted. You should know that because of deductibles and co-payment amounts,



your insurer often will not pay the entire anesthesia professional fee. Deductibles, co-payment amounts and non-covered expenses are the patient's responsibility. Federal law requires us to collect these payments. At your request, we will provide reasonable assistance in challenging your insurer for additional amounts owed by them. However, we consider any dispute over payment a matter between you and your insurance company and, ultimately we must look to you, the patient, for payment.

**If you have any questions about your anesthesia professional fee, please contact our billing office at (770) 645-7889, and always make a note of the person's name with whom you speak.**

## **PARTICIPATION WITH MEDICARE**

Your anesthesiologist accepts assignment on all Medicare patients. After we file your claim for you, Medicare will reimburse us 80% of the amount they consider reasonable for the anesthesia service performed. The remaining 20% is your responsibility. We will bill you and/or file your co-insurance for this remaining balance.

## **MEDICARE AND PAIN MANAGEMENT**

If you or your surgeon chooses epidural narcotic administration for your postoperative pain management, Medicare will pay us 80% of the amount they consider reasonable for placement of the epidural and typically up to two days pain management. The remaining 20% is your responsibility. We will bill you and/or file your co-insurance for this remaining balance.

## PRE-ANESTHETIC INSTRUCTIONS

- Nothing to eat or drink after midnight the evening before your surgery, or as instructed during your pre-admission assessment.
- You may brush your teeth the morning of surgery, but do not swallow any water.
- Your surgeon or anesthesiologist may instruct you to take specific medications the morning of surgery. If so, a small sip of water may be taken with your medication.

NORTHSIDE ANESTHESIOLOGY CONSULTANTS, LLC

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