

Let them know they will be getting anesthesia **1 day prior**, and remind them the morning of the appointment. Talk about the concrete steps for the day/experience:

- where you are going, how you are getting there
- very simply what will happen (see the doctor, get sleep medicine, wake up)
- what will happen following the event (go home to rest, go pick up sibling from school, watch movie?)

Using play or a book to initiate preparation for getting anesthesia allows for repetition of the information, and helps them to understand the routine of beginning, middle and end of experience.

When toddlers ask...

What is anesthesia?

Sleeping medicine so the doctors can help your body

- Not like sleeping at night time or during nap time

How does it work?

You will get the sleeping medicine through a mask that goes over your nose and mouth, and you breathe in the medicine **ask medical team beforehand if an IV will be placed before or after the child is sleeping - see IV placement if needed.

- It is helpful to practice this breathing through play in a non-threatening environment to allow for the child to have feelings of control

What do I do before?

"You can't eat or drink anything before surgery because sometimes the medicine they give you that makes you sleep can make your tummy hurt if you eat or drink before."

"Let's think of a plan for you to think about as your body is going to sleep"

- What do you want to think about? (favorite story, singing favorite song)
- What do you want to bring with you to the doctors/hospital? (favorite stuffed animal, blanket, backpack of distraction toys, pillow)

What happens after I wake up?

"You might feel super sleepy for a while."

- Some kids feel crabby when they wake up, that's okay too

"Mom/Dad/Caregiver will be there when you wake up and a nurse will be there to take care of you and to keep you safe."

"Your job when your body wakes up is to let us know if you are feeling anything hurts on your body."

Check with your medical team, but sometimes it can be helpful to share a positive experience to look forward too:

- Eat a popsicle when they wake up
- Go home after surgery
- Go to the playroom