

Anesthesia/Pain Terminology for the Patient

Analgesia. Absence of sensibility to pain without loss of consciousness. Pain relief.

Anesthesia. Temporary induced loss of sensation. It may include analgesia (relief from or prevention of pain), paralysis (muscle relaxation), amnesia (loss of memory), or unconsciousness.

Conscious Sedation. The physician anesthesiologist will provide medication that will relax you through an IV placed in a vein. Depending on the procedure, the level of sedation may range from minimal — making you drowsy but able to talk — to deep, meaning you probably won't remember the procedure. This type of anesthesia often is used for minimally invasive procedures such as colonoscopies. IV sedation is sometimes combined with local or regional anesthesia. Also called **Monitored Anesthesia Care (MAC)**, **sedation**, and **twilight sedation**.

Electrical Stimulation. Used for chronic pain. Involves stimulating nerve fibers through the skin to treat muscle spasms and pain.

Epidural Anesthesia. A form of regional anesthesia involving the injection of an anesthetic into the lumbar area of the spine in the space between the spinal cord and the dura, which eliminates sensation from the point of insertion downward, used especially in childbirth.

General Anesthesia. This type of anesthesia is provided through an anesthesia mask or IV. Under general anesthesia, you are completely unconscious and unable to feel pain during medical procedures. General anesthesia usually uses a combination of intravenous drugs and inhaled gasses (anesthetics). General anesthesia is more than just being asleep; the anesthetized brain doesn't respond to pain signals or reflexes. This type of anesthesia is used for major surgeries (such as open-heart) and may be combined with other types of anesthesia (such as regional for knee or hip surgery).

Inhaled Anesthesia. General anesthesia achieved by administration of an anesthetic gas through a mask.

Intravenous Anesthesia. Injection of an anesthetic drug into the bloodstream.

Local Anesthesia. This is usually a one-time injection of medicine used to numb a small area for a procedure such as having a mole or skin cancer removed.

Nerve Block. A procedure in which an anesthetic agent is injected directly near a nerve to block pain. A nerve block is a form of regional anesthesia.

Regional Anesthesia. Pain medication to numb a larger part of the body, such as the area below the waist, may be provided through an injection or a small tube called a catheter. You will be awake, but unable to feel the area that is numbed. This type of anesthesia is often used for childbirth and for surgeries of the arm, leg or abdomen.

Spinal Anesthesia. A form of regional anaesthesia involving the injection of a local anaesthetic into the subarachnoid space, generally through a fine needle. Also called a **spinal block**, **subarachnoid block**, **intradural block**, **intrathecal block**.

Spinal Cord Stimulation. Used to treat chronic pain in the back, arms, and legs. A device is **implanted** in the back and blocks pain by delivery electric pulses to nerve and the spinal cord.

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS). TENS machines works by sending stimulating pulses across the **surface of the skin** and along the nerve strands. The stimulating pulses help prevent pain signals from reaching the brain. TENS devices also help stimulate your body to produce higher levels of its own natural painkillers, called "endorphins."