

TAMARA R. FOUNTAIN, M.D.

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Keeping You Comfortable: Options for Pain Control (Anesthesia) During Your Operation

There are different ways we may minimize discomfort during your operation.

1. Local anesthesia

Local anesthesia is used in ALL Dr. Fountain's surgical procedures. Shots are given near and within the area your surgery will take place to both numb the area and minimize bleeding during the operation. As with any shot, there is some discomfort but it only lasts several seconds and you should be pain-free as soon as they are over. This is the only option for surgery done in the office setting. Some patients may choose to take a valium upon arrival to the office to "take the edge off." Please let us know if you would like this so we can call that in to your local pharmacy for pick up ahead of time.

2. Sedation ("twilight") anesthesia

Sedation (also known as monitored assisted care or MAC anesthesia) takes place in the hospital setting. You are given an intravenous line before surgery (involves a pin prick and a short period of discomfort) through which an anesthesiologist will give you drugs to make you sleepy. You will sleep through the numbing injections as described above and not feel or remember them. You will remain somewhat sleepy during your operation. Your level of sleepiness will depend on how well you are breathing and Dr. Fountain's need to communicate with you during the procedure. In order to receive this type of anesthesia, you are required by the hospital to see your primary doctor for an exam, necessary blood work and other testing within 30 days before your surgical procedure. You may not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before surgery.

3. General Anesthesia

Certain operations and all surgeries in young children will require general anesthesia. In this situation, you will receive an intravenous line prior to surgery (except in children who will be rendered unconscious by mask breathing before any painful poking or prodding) and once in the operating room will have a breathing tube placed by an anesthesiologist rendering you completely unconscious. Like with twilight anesthesia, you will not feel or remember the numbing injections. Similarly, all patients undergoing general anesthesia must undergo a physical exam, necessary blood work and other testing by their primary doctors no more than 30 days before surgery. Patients may not eat or drink after midnight before surgery if having general anesthesia.

How do I decide?

Dr. Fountain and her staff can help guide you. Certain procedures must be done under sedation or general anesthesia. The vast majority of surgery however can be done with only local injections either in the office or hospital. It often comes down to personal preference and tolerance.