

Observation Policy for Infants after Anesthesia

After receiving anesthesia for a surgery or other procedure, your infant (preterm or full term) may need to be observed at the hospital for a period of time, to make sure they are breathing normally.

- **What to expect:**
 - Be prepared to stay at the hospital overnight if needed (please note -- your other children will *not* be able to stay overnight at the hospital)
 - The length of stay will be based on your infant's age and medical condition
- **Why:** Young infants may not yet be able to control their breathing patterns, and they are more likely to stop taking regular breaths (called *apnea*) after anesthesia
 - Apnea after anesthesia is:
 - Usually temporary
 - Reported to occur in about 6% of young infants (highest in preterm infants)
 - Apnea can usually be taken care of with:
 - Gentle stimulation (like nudging, or changing position)
 - Additional care if needed (like extra oxygen, or help in breathing)
- **How long:** The observation period is based on current recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics (listed in the table below)
 - If your infant has apnea after the procedure, your infant's doctor will extend the observation period as needed
 - If your infant's procedure requires a hospital admission, the observation period will be part of the hospital stay
- **If you have questions:**
 - A nurse will review details with you by phone in preparation for your infant's procedure
 - Questions and concerns should be discussed with your infant's doctors
 - Consultation with a Pediatric Anesthesiologist can be arranged by calling (312) 227-5170

Infant age (*See definitions below)	Minimum Observation Period (without apnea)
Preterm infants less than 60 weeks corrected age	12 hours
Full term infants less than 4 weeks old	12 hours
Full term infants less than 6 months , but at least 4 weeks old	2 hours
*Definitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gestational Age: Completed weeks of pregnancy • Corrected Age (for preterm infants only): [Gestational age] + [Age since birth] • Full Term Infant: At least 37 weeks gestational age at birth • Preterm Infant: Less than 37 weeks gestational age at birth • Example: 32 weeks at birth, born 6 weeks ago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gestational age: 32 weeks, preterm ○ Chronological age: 6 weeks ○ Corrected age: 38 weeks 	

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