

OR Nurses: Are Anesthesiologist all the same?

For all you fellow Operating Room Nurses, I am going to write a series of articles about your changing role in the operating room as you move about the country. Your responsibilities will vary depending on the responsibilities of other members in your team.

Anesthesiologist are the same all over the country in that you can always find a few who will read, talk on the phone, drink coffee, work out with esmark, and other unspeakable things that probably are not permitted for me to say in this context. But let me say, the majority of them are very professional and rarely do they fail to give good patient care. Often they may just have a different way of going about it. Some anesthesiologist wants you to do everything from positioning the patient to applying all the monitoring equipment. While others don't want you to touch a thing...including the arm boards.

While anesthesiologist's jobs are basically the same, some are more high maintenance than others. This is partly due to their personality and partly due to the expectations set up in your work environment. I have worked at places that had anesthesiologist techs and I was expected to do virtually nothing to help anesthesia. On the other hand, I have worked at places where I was expected to do a variety of from setting up IV or blood lines, pushing drugs, getting anesthesia drugs out of pioxous for them, charging for all the anesthesia drugs used, replacing their empty IV bags with new warm IV bags when needed, and changing out their used gas and suction lines after surgery. Furthermore, some places want you to bring the patient to the operating room before the anesthesiologist, some want you to wait and bring the patient to the room at the same time, and finally....some places the anesthesiologist will bring the patient to the room.

Of course, anesthesiologists are not the only ones doing anesthesia nowadays. Many places use nurse practitioners now. Some nurse practitioners are allowed to work independently, while other places require you to page the Anesthesiologist and wait for his or her arrival before induction.

With all these differences how do you know what to do? Don't worry. Simply be attentive, try to help, and the anesthesiologist or nurse practitioner will ask for what they need. In no time, you will know exactly what is expected of you and what your role is in relation to the anesthesiologist. Sometimes it doesn't take much for a traveler to impress the anesthesia team with what they have learned in other places. Recently, I was working in a new place when I saw the IV bag getting low. I asked the anesthesiologist if he wanted me to get a new bag of Lactated Ringers for him. His reply was, "WOW.....you do that? That would be nice."