

# YOUR HEALTH

## Staying In Shape Gets You Fit For Surgery

(NAPSA)—Being physically fit may not only help you stay healthy, it can be significant if you do require surgery. Studies show that fit people have a distinct advantage going into surgery because their bodies are better prepared for anesthesia.

Anesthetics act on the central nervous system to modify the activity of neurons. This allows surgery to be performed without causing pain or triggering involuntary body movements that would make an operation impossible. In physically fit patients, the drugs used act more effectively and are more predictable, with fewer and more manageable side effects.

“In addition, those who are physically fit possess greater lung capacity, lower blood pressure, and stronger heart muscles. These all lead to greater ability to process out pre-existing harmful toxins and pollutants, resulting in less interference with anesthesia as well as faster recovery,” says Sandra Tunajek, CRNA, ND, director of Practice for the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

Anesthesia care is provided with the highest degree of professionalism, including constant monitoring of every important body function. As changes occur in your reactions to anesthesia, your nurse anesthetist responds by modifying the anesthetic to ensure your safety and comfort.

Regardless of your level of physical fitness, it's important that you schedule a presurgery conference with your nurse anesthetist. You can and should take an active role in preparing for



**Before surgery, tell your nurse anesthetist and surgeon about any medications or supplements you're taking.**

surgery by communicating and cooperating with your nurse anesthetist and surgeon. Sharing vital information can help make the anesthesia experience as safe as possible. Tell the surgeon and nurse anesthetist about:

- All your prescription and nonprescription medicines
- Your use of alcohol and any other drugs—medical personnel are required to maintain confidentiality
- Allergies or other adverse reactions you or family members have had to anesthetics
- Pregnancy
- Your diet and lifestyle habits, such as smoking or exercise.

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists can help you understand the anesthetic process so that when you face surgery, you can provide your nurse anesthetist with all necessary information. To learn more about anesthesia, visit [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com).