On Dec. 14, 2016 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a safety announcement regarding the potential effects of prolonged (> 3 hours) or repeated anesthetics on children younger than 3 years of age. Recent studies suggest that a single, relatively short exposure to general anesthetic and sedation drugs in infants or toddlers is unlikely to have negative effects on behavior or learning. However, further research is needed to fully characterize how early life anesthetic exposure affects children’s brain development.

To better inform our physician partners and patients' families, we have summarized points from the FDA’s communication to help facilitate discussions with your patient families and answer questions about the care of their young child.

**Discussion with Families:**

It is very important to me, as a physician, to share some information about anesthesia in young children with you. Would that be ok?

In December 2016, the FDA sent out a safety announcement regarding the possible effects of anesthesia on children younger than 3 years old.

There is a lot of research being done, and this is what we know so far.

- A single, short exposure to anesthesia appears to be safe.
- There is some evidence that longer (>3 hours) or repeated exposures could have negative effects on behavior or learning.

Because anesthesia or sedation is necessary during most procedures to keep your child safe and comfortable, there are a couple of items that we need to discuss.

- Should the procedure should be done now or when the child is older?
- How long do we expect the procedure to take?
- Will repeated or additional procedures be needed?

We encourage you to discuss this topic with an anesthesiologist. Here is the number where you can get more information, and these are some websites that you can visit.

- Texas Children’s Hospital Pediatric Anesthesiology:
  - (832) 824-5800
  - [http://www.texaschildrens.org/departments/anesthesiology](http://www.texaschildrens.org/departments/anesthesiology)
- Additional websites:
  - SmartTots: [http://www.smarttots.org](http://www.smarttots.org)

Again, at Texas Children’s we are taking the FDA announcement seriously and want to make sure that we are providing the best care possible and keeping you well informed.

What questions can I answer?