What Are The Different Types Of Anesthesia?

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For most people, anesthesia is one of the more mysterious branches of medicine. What we do for patients is done, generally, when they are asleep. You the patient don't exactly know what we are going to do, or how it's done, but you put yourselves in our hands willingly. It's sort of a weird relationship we have with other humans. We have done our job right if our patients don't remember most of what we did.

There are actually several types of anesthesia, the two most common being general anesthesia and monitored anesthesia care. But the two are really just different degrees on the continuum of awake and asleep. On the lightest end, monitored anesthesia care (MAC), drugs are given to you to make you more or less "sleepy" depending on what you are having done and the surgeon preference and, to some degree, your preference. General anesthesia is usually done with some of the same drugs, but in greater doses, for a more deep sleep that generally requires that the anesthesiologist breathe for you in some way or another. If 1 is awake and 10 is asleep, MAC is more towards the 1 (small hammer) and general is more towards the 10 (big hammer). If someone asks you "have you had general anesthesia before" you may say yes even thought you really had a MAC because often patients can't tell the difference.

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