

Dr. Tim Smith
Board Certified Medical Anesthesiologist

CAN YOU GIVE US A LITTLE INFORMATION ON YOUR BACKGROUND?

“I’m Dr. Tim Smith, and I’m a board certified anesthesiologist. I’ve been in practice here in Arizona since 1994. Some of you might be wondering, what is a board certified anesthesiologist and how is that different from other types of anesthesia providers? Well, first of all, to become an anesthesiologist you have to go to four years of medical school. Then you’ll do one year of internship, then three years of residency. To become board certified, you then have to pass both a written and oral exam that shows you’ve received a degree in excellence. You’re not just someone who has the basic knowledge, but you’ve actually exceeded all the knowledge available for anesthesia.”

HOW DID YOU START WORKING WITH DR. TOAL?

“I started working with Dr. Toal in 1994. In 1996, she approached me because she wanted to set up her own operating rooms that would allow her to provide more personalized care to her patients. The unique thing about Dr. Toal’s request is that she immediately stated she wanted to do things as safely as possible, regardless of the cost. This is very unusual when somebody asks for help in setting up their office. Usually, they want to try and cut costs as much as possible—sometimes at the expense of safety. But Dr. Toal’s primary interest was making sure that this was done in the safest environment possible.

I’ve been working with her at her office, and also at Scottsdale Abrazo Hospital, for over twenty years. I provide anesthesia care, she provides the dental care; we serve a wide-range of patients. These are patients that might be dental-phobics, or for whatever reason they haven’t been to the dentist for ten to twenty years. They have multiple dental problems that require extensive work. Or we might have patients with very extensive medical histories that aren’t able to receive care in the traditional dental office.

She provides a very niche care for these types of patients, which I think is great. This office is geared toward treating those types of patients. They’re used to taking care of patients with different concerns, different medical problems, and they are capable of taking care of all those types of needs.”

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANESTHESIA?

“At Dr. Toal’s office, you can actually have multiple types of anesthesia, ranging from oral sedation to IV sedation (sometimes referred to as twilight anesthesia), all the way to general anesthesia. Now, for the oral sedation, no anesthesiologist is required. She’ll have a nurse who’s trained in that specific type of administration of medications. That’s a light sedation for those patients that just need a little sedation. Some patients may just need a quick procedure and might

not require really deep anesthesia. For them, we can do IV sedation; that's a little bit deeper than oral sedation.

Patients get their medication through the IV, and are monitored with an EKG, blood pressure, pulse oximetry—all types of monitoring to make sure they are safe.

At the top end is the general anesthetic. That's when Dr. Toal includes a board certified anesthesiologist. When she's going to be doing extensive work for an extended period of time. The patient is completely unconscious and complete unaware of what's going on. There are multiple ways to administer that anesthesia. Most commonly, it's done by starting an IV preoperatively, giving you a sedative prior to getting into the dental room, and then giving you stronger medication through the IV that will drift you completely off to sleep. Then we have you breathe in some anesthetic gases afterward that keep you asleep for the duration of the procedure.

Now, some of Dr. Toal's patients are such phobics that they don't even like needles. They don't want needles anywhere near them. For those patients, we offer a different type of anesthetic. We bring you into the dental operating room and have you breathe anesthetic gases and drift off to sleep that way. Then we can start your IV after you're asleep. There are multiple ways that we're able to do the anesthesia, and do it safely, and do it comfortably for the patient, as well."