



Physical Status Modifiers: Quick Reference

Physical status modifiers **P1–P6** describe the patient’s overall health status at the time anesthesia is administered. Look at the patient’s underlying conditions and how significantly those conditions affect their health.

Modifier	Definition	Examples of How It May Appear in the Record
P1	A normal, healthy patient	Healthy patient with no significant medical problems; no systemic disease
P2	A patient with mild systemic disease	Well-controlled hypertension; well-controlled diabetes; mild obesity; current smoker without significant systemic effects
P3	A patient with severe systemic disease	Poorly controlled hypertension or diabetes; morbid obesity; COPD; ESRD undergoing regularly scheduled dialysis
P4	A patient with severe systemic disease that is a constant threat to life	Recent MI; severe valve dysfunction; sepsis; severe respiratory failure; ongoing cardiac ischemia
P5	A moribund patient who is not expected to survive without the operation	Ruptured abdominal aneurysm with shock; massive trauma with severe hemorrhage; intracranial bleed with significant mass effect
P6	A declared brain-dead patient whose organs are being removed for donor purposes	Brain death has been declared and anesthesia services are provided during organ procurement



What Might This Look Like in an Anesthesia Question?

P1:

“25-year-old healthy patient with no significant past medical history presents for elective surgery.”

P2:

“52-year-old patient with well-controlled hypertension presents for an elective procedure.”

P3:

“67-year-old patient with poorly controlled diabetes and COPD presents for surgery.”

P4:

“72-year-old patient with severe aortic stenosis and ongoing cardiac ischemia requires surgery.”

P5:

“Patient presents in profound shock from a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm and is taken emergently to the operating room.”

P6:

“Patient has been declared brain dead and is taken to the operating room for organ procurement.”

Quick Tip: Do not choose the modifier based solely on the procedure being performed. The physical status modifier describes the ***patient’s condition***, not how difficult or risky the surgery is.