

## Nerve Block for Pain Control After Surgery: Home Instructions

# What is a nerve block and why do I need it?

Nerve blocks can help manage your pain and reduce the need for pain medications like opioids. Opioids can have unwanted side effects, including potential addiction.

Nerve blocks decrease pain signals in a specific area of your body, such as your arm, leg, abdomen (belly), or chest. It is used to minimize pain both during surgery and as you recover after. A nerve block is given as a one-time injection or through a nerve block catheter. A nerve block catheter is a tiny, flexible tube placed under the skin.

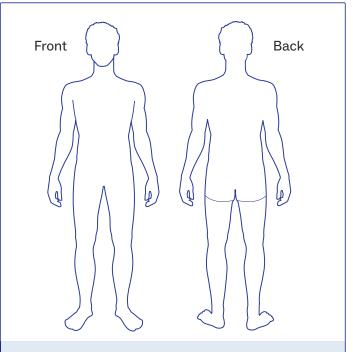
#### When will the nerve block wear off?

How soon your nerve block wears off will depend on the type of block and the medication used.

- If you had a single injection, it should wear off anywhere from 8 to 72 hours after it was given. Be sure to ask your anesthesia provider about the type of nerve block and medications used for your procedure and what you can expect.
- In some cases, you may go home with a nerve block catheter in place. It will be attached to a small pump called a **local anesthetic infusion**

device or LAID. The LAID: Home Instructions Sheet will provide more information.

Your care tea washing your Follow the ine	he Flow Rate in sull instruct you to reset the flow rate of the pump. Always begin by hand, then open the carrying pixels and enrove the Flee Begulator, structure below for secting the flow rate. After completion, put the Flow is the pouch rate of low it. Be sure that the tuiting is free and han no kirks.
1	Remove the blue Lock Guard.
	Gently pull the white dial up on the Flow Regulator.
2	To reset the Flow Regulator to a desired flow rate, rotate the white dial and aligs it with the black position indicator. Turn counterclockwise to increase the flow rate. Turn clockwise to decrease the flow rate.
2	Push the white dial back in place to set flow rate. Avoid pressing the Red Ring at all times.
°	To secure flow rate temporarily, insert the blue Lock Guard between the Red King and the white dial.
	To secure a new flow-rate setting, make sure both C-Clamps are open.
1	If the Red Fing is accidently pushed down, the flow rate is permanently locked. Do not try to lift it up simply leave the setting as it is and report it to your doctor or healthcare provider.



Your body has thousands of nerves. A nerve block is placed near the nerve or group of nerves that affects the area being operated on. Your doctor or nurse will circle the area that will be numbed with the nerve block.

#### What can I expect?

You may feel a tingling and heaviness in the area, as if it is "asleep." Feelings of numbness and loss of sensation are normal. Your sensation will slowly start to return as the nerve block wears off. You may notice sensations like:

- Cold
- Itching
- Tingling
- · An increased awareness of pain

As your sensation is returning, pay close attention to your pain level and take your medication **before** your block wears off.

### How do I prevent injury at home?

Take extra care not to injure yourself. You may not be able to feel pain, pressure, or extreme temperatures until the block wears off.

- Your arm or leg may feel weak from the block. This can increase your chance of injury.
- Don't let anything bump or rest on the numb area.
- Avoid extreme temperatures. You may not feel discomfort or pain from something too hot or too cold.
- Follow your surgeon's instructions carefully when using cold packs or ice.
- Change positions often. This will help you avoid putting too much pressure on the affected area. You may need help changing positions.
- If you are given a brace, sling, or crutches, use them exactly as directed.

## What are the side effects?

Possible side effects include:

- Irritating numbness
- Weakness and difficulty moving an arm or leg
- Pain from surgery even with the nerve block
- Bruising at the nerve block site

#### Upper arm or shoulder surgery

If you had surgery on your upper arm or shoulder, you may have:

- Sagging upper eyelid
- Smaller pupil, or slight eye redness
- Shortness of breath especially when lying flat. This will go away once the block wears off. Sleeping in a sitting position can make it easier to breathe.

These symptoms are common and will get better as the block wears off.

#### When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you experience any of the following:

- Severe shortness of breath
- Allergic reaction
- Numbness or weakness in the arm or leg for more than a week
- Pain that does not get better with the medication you were prescribed
- Signs of infection such as redness, swelling, or a fever of 101° F (38.8° C) or higher

Call 911 or go to the neaest emergency room if you have:

- Numbness around your mouth
- Blurred vision
- Ringing in your ears
- A metallic taste
- A seizure

Contact your pain team with any nonemergency questions about your block.

Phone:



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