

Peripheral Nerve Block

Patient and Family Education



Children's Mercy
KANSAS CITY

What is it?

- ✓ A nerve block is used to help decrease pain after surgery.
- ✓ Local anesthetic (numbing medicine) is injected around the nerves that carry painful sensation from a specific part of the body.

Why is it recommended?

- ✓ After a nerve block, the part of the body that was "blocked" may feel numb, heavy, or weak with temporary loss of normal movement.
- ✓ There may still be some pain, but it should be more dull and less intense than without the nerve block.
- ✓ The nerve block should help reduce the need for other pain medicines. This can help decrease pain medicine side effects such as nausea, vomiting, constipation, drowsiness, or slow breathing.

How long does it last?

- ✓ A nerve block generally lasts 12-24 hours.
- ✓ In some cases, a nerve block can last up to 48-72 hours.
- ✓ The length of time a nerve block works can vary.

As the nerve block wears off:

- ✓ Strength and movement will generally return first.
- ✓ Sensation will then begin to return. This may be noted as a tingling feeling-as if the area is "asleep."
- ✓ Take oral pain medication now. Pain can come back quickly-it is better to "stay ahead" of the pain.
- ✓ Take oral pain medication before going to bed, even if the block hasn't worn off yet.

Be careful:

- ✓ Protect the blocked area from any potential injuries (such as from heat or sharp objects), as sensation will be decreased.
- ✓ Use caution when walking to prevent falls, as strength and movement will be decreased.

Monitor the site:

- ✓ Bruising or mild discomfort where the nerve block was given is normal.
- ✓ Redness, swelling, extreme tenderness, warmth, or drainage where the nerve block was given can be signs of infection and should be reported immediately.

Questions or concerns about the nerve block?

- ✓ Please call 816-234-3000-ask the hospital operator to page "the anesthesia acute pain attending".