

Discharge advice: Regional Anaesthesia (Nerve Block)

A nerve block is an injection to stop the nerves sending pain signals for a short time. As well as pain relief, nerve blocks can also cause numbness, tingling, heaviness and weakness or inability to move the affected limb.

Duration of a nerve block

- The effect of the nerve block should wear off gradually, with return of normal feeling in less than 24 hours
- For larger procedures, a nerve catheter and medication pump can be used to prolong the nerve block by infusing local anaesthetic for several days (if required)
- Once the numbness wears off, it is normal to need pain relief in other forms, such as tablets like Panadol or prescription medications provided on discharge
- A nerve block may not take away all your pain – you may need to take some pain medicine as well

Be mindful of the reduced sensation and weakness, as it is possible to injure yourself without realising it. It is important to follow the below instructions until the numbness has worn off, and feeling has completely returned to normal:

- Do not apply pressure or hot or cold items to the affected area, as this can result in injury or burns
- Do not drive or operate machinery while your limb is numb
- Do not attempt to mobilise without assistance, as reduced sensation/weakness could make walking difficult, increasing your risk of falling
- If required, support the affected limb with a sling or use pillows to pad it while sleeping until the block resolves. This will help prevent unintended injury due to lack of control in the affected limb
- If you have a cast or a tight dressing, check the temperature and colour of your fingers/toes every couple of hours until the block wears off. Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency department if they look discoloured (pale/grey/dusty) or are cold to touch

Complications of a nerve block

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| #1 |  | Worsening pain, numbness, burning, pins and needles continuing 48 hours after block performed. |
| #2 |  | Redness/swelling/pus |
| #3 |  | Fevers |
| #4 |  | Continuing weakness |

As your nerve block resolves you may experience pins and needles and then some discomfort. You should start taking your prescribed medication when you start to feel this discomfort commence.

Complications are rare, however, should you have any concerns about possible complications, please seek medical advice (your GP or the Acute Pain Service) at any time.

Acute Pain Service

Phone: 07 3413 7930

Monday to Friday – 7.30am to 4.30pm

Ipswich Hospital Switchboard

Phone: 07 3810 1111

After hours, ask to speak to the Anaesthetist on call

Interpreter Services

available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no charge. Please contact our staff for assistance.

