

# NERVE BLOCK ANESTHESIA

## What is a nerve block?

A nerve block is a type of anesthesia (pronounced an-ehs-thees-ee-ah). Anesthesia is medicine which keeps you from feeling pain during surgery.

A nerve block numbs the area being operated on. You are **AWAKE** during the operation but do not feel any pain. You do not have to stay in hospital overnight after surgery.

## Who gives the nerve block?

A nerve block is given by a specially trained doctor called an anesthesiologist. This doctor is responsible for looking after your pain and keeping you comfortable during surgery. Your anesthesiologist will tell you more about your nerve block on the day of surgery.

## Where is the nerve block done?

When you have a nerve block in the surgical procedure room, you do not go to sleep during the surgery. This means that you do not have a general anesthetic.

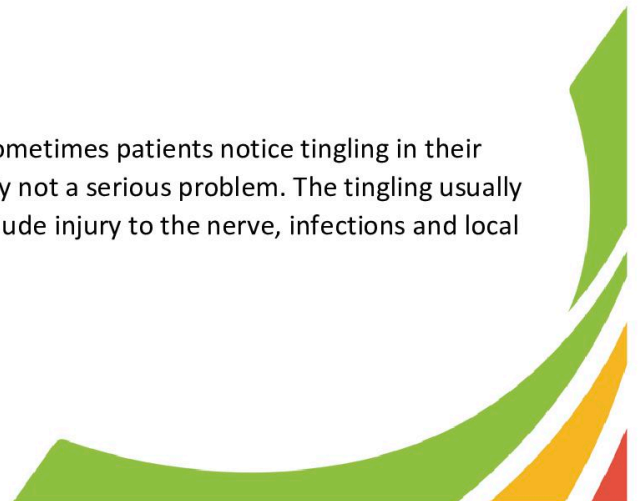
## What are the benefits of a nerve block?

When you have a nerve block instead of a general anesthetic, you:

- Are less likely to be sick to your stomach
- Have a shorter recovery time after your surgery
- Have better pain relief immediately after your surgery
- Go home sooner
- Can eat sooner

## What are the risk of a nerve block?

You may get a small bruise where the medicine was injected. Sometimes patients notice tingling in their fingers and toes after the nerve block wears off. This is generally not a serious problem. The tingling usually goes away after a few days. Serious side effects are rare but include injury to the nerve, infections and local infection overdose.



### **What happens during a nerve block?**

- I. The doctor starts by giving you sedation. This is medicine to make you feel relaxed.
- II. So that you do not feel the nerve block procedure, the doctor uses a small needle to inject local anesthetic in your skin. This medicine numbs or freezes the area.
- III. The doctor uses an ultrasound machine to find the nerve for the area being operated on. The doctor injects more anesthetic around the nerves.
- IV. In about 30 minutes, the area being operated on will be completely numb. You will not feel anything.
- V. Once the area is numb, we move you into the surgical procedure room to begin your surgery.
- VI. The anesthesiologist or their assistant will stay with you to make sure you are very comfortable during your surgery.
- VII. If you bring headphones and a music player, you can listen to music during your procedure.

### **How long does the nerve block last?**

The anesthesia (numbing medicine) usually lasts between 4 to 36 hours after surgery. If you have a nerve block in your arm or leg, it will be weak for this amount of time.

### **Is there an alternative to a nerve block?**

The alternative to a nerve block is a “general anesthetic.” During this procedure we give you medicine to make you sleep. The anesthesiologist then places a tube into your throat to help you breathe. Common side effects of this type of anesthesia are feeling sleepy and nauseated afterwards as well as having a sore throat. Rare side effects include damage to the teeth and lung infection.

If you feel that you do not want a nerve block, and would rather have a general anesthetic, it is important to inform your surgeon. They will book you in the main operating room where you can have a general anesthetic.

