

After your child's nerve block

Your child had a **nerve block** for pain control after surgery. During this procedure, your child received a dose of local anesthetic through a needle. **Local anesthetic** is a numbing medication that targets specific nerves. The nerve block should reduce the amount of pain that your child feels after surgery or injury.

What to expect

- Your child's surgical site, or limb (arm or leg) on the side of surgery, will feel numb. Your child's limb may feel heavy, tingly or weak. The skin on their abdomen (stomach) or chest may be numb.
- The numbness will go away after 6-24 hours. This time depends on where the block was.
- A nerve block may not take all the pain away. Your child should take their pain medication as per your discharge instructions.

Caring for your child after a nerve block

- **DO NOT** let your child drive or use dangerous machinery while their limb is numb. Local anesthetic can numb the nerves that move your child's arm or leg muscles. Your child not be able to control their arm or leg while the local anesthetic is working.
- **DO NOT** apply pressure, heat, or cold to the numb areas, except as directed by your doctor. Local anesthetic reduces sensation. Your child may not realize their limb is being injured by pressure, heat or cold.
- If your child had a nerve block for surgery on their leg or foot, they **MUST NOT** put weight or walk on the affected leg until the block wears off, or until enough strength has returned. Encourage your child to ask for help before they stand or walk.
- If your child had a nerve block for penile or scrotal surgery, they **MUST NOT** move faster than a walk until feeling returns to the surgical site.
- If your child's surgeon prescribed a sling or brace, your child **MUST** keep it on while they are still numb. Your child can remove the sling or brace to do physical therapy. Afterward, they should wear it as prescribed.
- In the next 24-48 hours, **CHECK** the injection site (where the needle went in) for signs of infection. A small bruise is normal. **If you notice redness, swelling, excessive tenderness, or pus, call the Acute Pain Nurse Practitioner or the On-Call Acute Pain Service Doctor.** The doctor may want to see your child.



Get help if your child has:

- Signs of infection (redness, excessive tenderness, or pus) at the injection site
- Ringing or rumbling in their ear(s),
- A metallic or funny taste, or numbness in their mouth or lips,
- Dizziness, agitation, or nervousness,
- Hives, rash or itching,
- Irregular breathing and heartbeat,
- Difficulty breathing,
- Chest pain, or
- A high fever and tenderness in the back or spine at the injection site a week after the procedure.

Call 604-875-2345 IMMEDIATELY. Ask for the On-Call Acute Pain Service Doctor.
If your child's symptoms are severe, CALL 911

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can my child take pain medication, even if they are still numb?

Yes. The local anesthetic from the nerve block will not interact with your child's pain medication. Your child should continue to take their pain medication as prescribed, or as per your discharge instructions.

My child still has numbness after 24 hours. Is this normal?

Some children still have numbness 24 hours after a nerve block. However, this can be a sign of something more serious. If your child still has numbness 24 hours after their nerve block:

- Call 604-875-2345 and ask for the On-Call Acute Pain Service Doctor, and
- Contact your child's surgeon, as this could also be a problem related to your child's surgery or injury.

Do I need to cover the injection site with any dressing like a Band-Aid?

No. The injection site is very small. It will heal on its own.

Can my child bathe after a single shot peripheral nerve block?

Yes, your child can bathe when the nerve block has worn off, and if

- Someone can help your child with balance and moving in the bathroom, and
- Your child's surgeon says a bath is okay.

Questions? You can contact the Acute Pain Nurse Practitioner (Monday – Friday from 8 am to 4 pm) at **604-788-9979** or call BC Children's Hospital at **604-875-2345**, and ask the operator to page the On-Call Acute Pain Service Doctor.