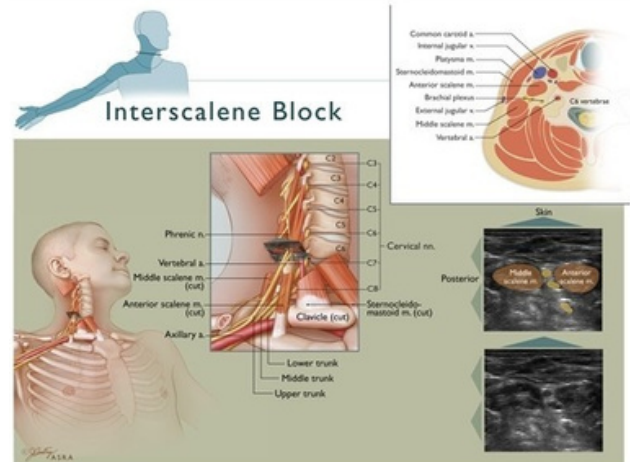


PATIENT EDUCATION - NERVE BLOCKS

WHAT TYPES OF NERVE BLOCKS ARE AVAILABLE?

Interscalene Block

An interscalene nerve block is the most common type of nerve block used in shoulder surgeries and is the best way to block the first part of the brachial plexus, where the nerves to the shoulder come from. You will lie on your back with your back slightly elevated and your head turned away from the shoulder that will be receiving the block. You may be asked to lift your head off the operating table to help the anesthesiologist identify muscle landmarks that will guide the placement of the block. Alternatively, you may be asked to lie on your side to receive the block.



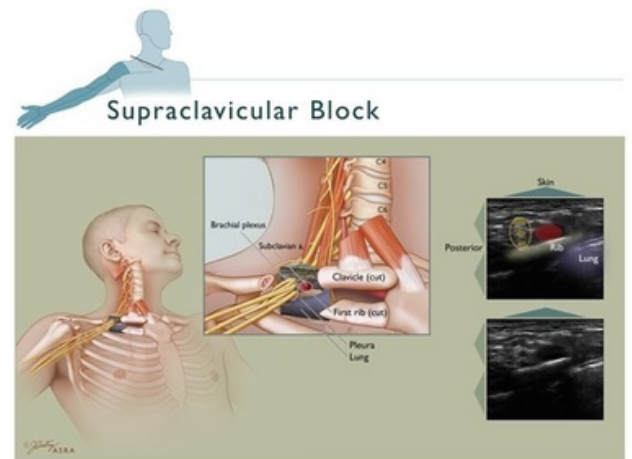
After cleaning the area above the collarbone with an antiseptic solution, your anesthesiologist will apply a local anesthetic to numb the area or use sedation for comfort. He or she will then determine the precise location for the needle using either nerve stimulation, ultrasound guidance, or both.

Following the injection of the numbing medicine near the nerve bundle, your surgical team will wait to make sure the medicine has spread into the area before beginning your procedure.

Supraclavicular Block

The supraclavicular block can be also used in shoulder surgeries, with similar success rates and side effects to an interscalene block. It is placed while you are lying flat on your back with your head turned away from the shoulder that will be blocked.

Following the application of an antiseptic solution and numbing up your skin or administering sedation, your anesthesiologist will use ultrasound guidance to place the block. Nerve stimulation may or may not also be used. The supraclavicular block may be applied as a single injection or a catheter to allow for additional doses or continuous infusion of the local anesthetic for postoperative pain relief. After the block has been done, your surgical team will wait for the medication to take effect before beginning your surgery.



PATIENT EDUCATION - NERVE BLOCKS

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF NERVE BLOCKS?

Nerve blocks have several advantages in surgery. First, nerve blocks provide better pain relief after surgery than the combination of general anesthesia and systemic pain-relieving medications such as opioids that are given after surgery. This is because pain relief provided by nerve blocks is much more specific to the location of the pain. You will also need lower doses of opioids after surgery to control your pain. Opioids have several side effects so minimizing their use is important. Regional anesthesia provides greater muscle relaxation than general anesthesia. You will also need less anesthesia for the surgery because your extremity is totally numb during and after the procedure. That means that you will have less pain, your recovery will be quicker, and your rehabilitation will be easier.

If you happen to receive a block and sedation for surgery instead of receiving general anesthesia, you may avoid many of the side effects and complications associated with general anesthesia, including feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up after anesthesia, commonly known as postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV).

If you have questions or concerns, please ask your physician or nurse.

PATIENT EDUCATION - NERVE BLOCKS

GOING HOME AFTER AN UPPER EXTREMITY NERVE BLOCK (HAND, ELBOW, SHOULDER)

Your physician has recommended a nerve block as anesthesia for your surgery. A nerve block is a shot of numbing medication that prevents you from feeling any pain at the site of surgery. This brochure explains what to expect and how to care for yourself after you leave the hospital. Carefully follow any instructions your surgeon, anesthesiologist, and nurse give you.

Procedure

Your care team may give you the nerve block before or after your surgery. You will lose all feeling and movement in the arm where you will have the surgery. This may last up to 24 to 48 hours.

For shoulder surgery, the numbing medication is put around the nerves just above the collarbone. The numbness will go from your hand up through your shoulder. The nerve block can last 24 to 48 hours. **During this time, it is important to protect yourself from injury.**

Protect Your Arm

The nerve block may affect the way you sense your arm's position and location. You may feel like you are not sure where or how your arm is placed or positioned.

- You will not be able to control your shoulder, arm, or hand movement until the nerve block wears off.
- You will not be able to tell if your arm is twisted or if anything is pushing against it. Wear your arm sling to keep your arm in the proper position. Keep it on until at least 3 to 6 hours after the numbing effect of the nerve block wears off.

Protect your shoulder, arm, and hand from hot and cold temperatures. Your sense of hot and cold is dulled until the block wears off.

If you have shoulder surgery, your care team may give you a cooling unit for your shoulder. The cooling unit helps relieve pain and swelling. Be sure to carefully follow the cooling unit guidelines.

Prevent Falls

Your arm may feel different or heavier. This can affect your balance and increase your risk of falling.

Until the block completely wears off and all feeling and movement is completely back to normal, be extra careful to avoid a fall.

Have someone with you at home after your surgery. Remember that you will not be able to use your arm.

PATIENT EDUCATION - NERVE BLOCKS

GOING HOME AFTER AN UPPER EXTREMITY NERVE BLOCK (HAND, ELBOW, SHOULDER)

Stay Comfortable

- Begin to take your pain medication as soon as you notice the block starting to wear off and you are starting to feel some discomfort or pain. Then, take the medication on the schedule prescribed by your physician, as needed for pain.
- Do not wait to feel severe pain. It is easier to prevent the buildup of pain than to try to stop it once it is there.
- Contact your surgeon about any severe pain that is not being managed by your medication.

Special instructions

You may feel some hoarseness, upper eyelid droop, nose congestion, and eye redness on the side of your surgery. These effects go away as the block wears off. Let your team know if these signs last longer than 24 to 48 hours after your surgery.

You may feel some mild breathing discomfort. This goes away as the block wears off. If you have breathing discomfort, rest and sleep with your head and upper body resting on 2 to 3 pillows. It may also help to sit in a recliner, with your upper body raised. Let your team know if the breathing discomfort gets worse and is not relieved by raising your upper body.