

Nerve Blocks for Pain Management

What is Nerve a Block?

A nerve block is a way to make your arm or leg numb, before your surgery, to help reduce pain after surgery. It is performed by an anesthesiologist.

Who Gets a Nerve Block?

If you are having surgery on the shoulder, arm, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, leg, ankle or foot you may be a candidate for a nerve block.

Your surgeon and the anesthesiologist will discuss what pain management options would be the best for you. You may decline the option for a nerve block if you do not feel it is the best option for you. Patients having spine surgery are not candidates for these types of nerve blocks because they are used only for surgeries on the extremities (arms or legs).

How is a Nerve Block Done?

A nerve block is done by injecting numbing medicine (local anesthetic) around the nerves that go into either your arm or leg depending on what type of surgery you are having. The nerve block maybe done in a special treatment area called APS (Acute Pain Service) or it may be done in the operating room.

You will be given intravenous sedation for the procedure to help you relax. You may experience some discomfort related to muscle twitching when the nerve is stimulated.

Will I Have Any Pain After Surgery?

The nerve block should reduce your pain after surgery so you may not need as much pain medication. Your pain relief from the block may last for up to 12 to 24 hours after surgery. You are encouraged to use the pain medications prescribed by your surgeon to help manage the pain during activity such as exercises and also to prevent an increase in pain when the block wears off.

Continuous Block with "Pain Ball"

Some patients may have a continuous pain block with a "pain ball" which can last up to three days. Your surgeon will determine what is best for you based on your surgery.

