

Care After an Interscalene Brachial Plexus Block

General Information

An interscalene brachial plexus (shoulder) block is used to give you pain relief during and after your surgery.

The anesthesiologist (doctor of anesthesia) will inject the medicine into the side of your neck above your collar bone. This will cause numbness of your shoulder, arm and hand.

With the interscalene brachial plexus block, you may have received other medicines (sedation) to make you comfortable. They will affect your ability to think clearly and make good decisions.

Diet

- Drink small amounts of clear liquids, such as water, soda or apple juice.
- Avoid foods that are sweet, spicy or hard to digest for today.
- Eat more foods as your body can tolerate.
- If you feel nauseated, do not eat or drink anything for 1 hour and then try drinking clear liquids.

Activity

- For your safety, you will need a responsible adult to drive you home and to stay with you for 24 hours.
- For 24 hours:
 - Do not drive or use any machinery.
 - Do not make important decisions.
 - Do not drink alcohol. (It is also important to not drink alcohol as long as you are taking prescription pain medicine.)
- Protect your arm while it is numb.
- Wear your sling or immobilizer as directed by your doctor.
- Stay quiet and rest today. You may feel sleepy.
- Avoid extreme temperatures while your arm is numb.

Discomfort/Medicines

- Pain relief may last for 10 to 12 hours.
- Take your prescribed pain medicine as soon as you feel aching in your arm or as the numbness wears off.

Injection Site

- You may have some tenderness or bruising at the injection site. This feeling should decrease over the next several days.

Possible Side Effects

The possible side effects of the injection are not serious and will decrease in several hours. They include:

- numbness of your arm and hand
- hoarse voice
- scratchy feeling in your throat
- congestion of your face, nose and eye (one side only)
- change in your pupil size (unequal pupils)
- facial droop (one side only)

- bloodshot eye
- warm feeling in the side of your face and arm
- problems swallowing
- mild breathlessness.

When To Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if you have any serious breathing problems.

Other

- **Read the instructions you received when you left the hospital.**
- If you have any questions or concerns, call the hospital and ask to speak with an anesthesiologist.