

How to Care for a Peripheral Nerve Block Catheter

Purpose of a Peripheral Nerve Block

A peripheral nerve block catheter delivers a numbing medicine near some of the nerves that give feeling to your surgery site. The block reduces your feelings of pain.

Peripheral nerve blocks affect the nerves that control pain, feeling and movement. The nerve block may cause numbness, tingling, heaviness, warmth, weakness or an inability to move your affected arm or leg. Effects of the nerve block will stop when the medicine wears off.

How to Manage Your Pump

There is nothing you need to do. The pump delivers medicine nonstop.

You may have a pump with a button that allows you to give yourself more doses of medicine. To use the pump:

- Press down on the button until it locks into place.
- The medicine will be delivered. The button will pop up after a few minutes.
- If the button does not pop back up after 30 minutes, call the anesthesiologist.
- Another full dose of medicine is ready when the orange refill indicator is at the top level. This will take one hour.

The rate you receive the medicine should only be changed after you talk to the anesthesiologist.

It will be 36 to 40 hours before the ball-shaped pump appears smaller. The pump is working as long as your pain is under control. You will see more wrinkles on the outside of the pump as it is working.

If your pain is not under control, make sure the clamp is open and the tubing is not kinked.

Site and Pump Care

- Keep the clear plastic dressing clean and dry.
- If the edges of the dressing begin to curl or roll, add another dressing to secure it in place. Do not remove the dressing until it is time to remove the pump.
- You may have some drainage from the insertion site. Drainage at the insertion site is not a concern as long as your pain is under control.
- The pump will be placed in a zippered pack. You may wear the pack wherever it is comfortable. Avoid dropping the pump because it may cause the catheter to move or come out.
- You may not take a shower or bath until the catheter is removed. Follow your surgeon's directions.

What to do When the Pump is Empty

When the pump is empty of fluid, remove the pump and catheter tube.

How to Remove the Pump and Catheter

- Remove the dressing.
- The catheter may be removed when the dressing comes off.
- Pull the catheter out slowly and steadily.
- The catheter tube should pull out easily and should not hurt. If you have problems removing it or if you feel pain, stop and call the anesthesiologist.
- Check the end of the tubing for a black or silver tip. If there is no black or silver tip, call your doctor.
- There may be some clear drainage at the site if the medicine has just been completed. This should cause no concern.
- Put on a bandage if needed.
- Throw both the pump and catheter tube in the garbage.

If at any time before the pump is empty, the pump or catheter becomes disconnected, do not try to reconnect it. Call your anesthesiologist.

Once the catheter is out, you cannot get the pump refilled. Use the pain medicine prescription you received.

General Pain Information

Please take your pain pill as prescribed by your doctor in addition to having this pump. Be sure to take a pain pill before you go to bed on your first night home.

Symptoms

Call the anesthesiologist if you have any of the following:

- drowsiness
- lightheadedness, dizziness and/or feeling disoriented

- signs of infection:
 - tenderness
 - redness
 - swelling
 - drainage at the catheter site
- pain not controlled by the pump or your pain pills
- anxiety
- numbness around your mouth
- metallic taste in your mouth
- blurred vision
- ringing in your ears (tinnitus)
- any questions or concerns.

Precautions

You may have some loss of feeling or loss of control at or around your affected arm or leg. Do not drive or operate heavy machines and do not put any weight on your affected arm or leg until your doctor says it is OK.

Whom to Call for Help

- **Abbott Northwestern Hospital:**
Call 612-654-4291, listen to the message, enter your phone number and hang up. You will receive a call.
- **Buffalo Hospital:**
Call the hospital's administrative supervisor at 763-684-7612.
- **Cambridge Medical Center:**
 - Call 763-688-7935 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.
 - Call the Nursing Supervisor at 763-688-7994 during all other hours.
- **New Ulm Medical Center:**
Call the Surgery Department at 507-233-1161. If there is no answer, call the Emergency Department at 507-233-1344.