

# Continuous Peripheral Nerve Block Using a Patient Controlled Analgesia Pump

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## Can I give myself too much medication?

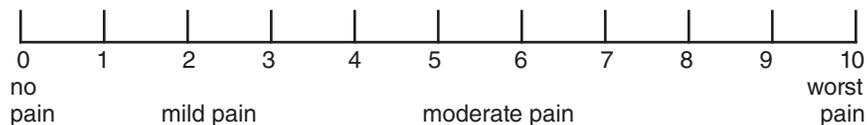
The machine has many safety features built into it. You cannot give yourself too much medication.

The machine is programmed to give you a certain amount of medication all of the time.

The machine will not give you any extra medication if you have pushed the button before the programmed times.

## How do I measure my pain?

You use the scale below to describe the amount of pain you are having. The nurses and other members of the health care team use this scale when they are looking after you.



## How long will I use the machine?

For most people, a nurse takes the catheter out in 2 to 3 days. It is painless to remove. You then take oral pain control medication if needed.

One goal of your care is to have your pain well controlled so you can do the things you need to do to recover after surgery such as move around, walk and do your exercises. You should not expect, however, to be totally pain free. There is usually some discomfort after injury or surgery. If you are not satisfied with your pain control talk to your nurse so other pain medications may be offered to you.

## Is a nerve block safe?

As with all medical procedures there are risks. Serious complications are extremely rare. Less than 1 in 100 patients have 'pins and needles' for several weeks. Permanent nerve injury is extremely rare. It is very uncommon to have an allergy to local anesthetic (freezing) medication.

Very rarely local anesthetic may be injected into the bloodstream. This can cause ringing in your ears, and a metallic taste in your mouth. It is important to tell your anesthesiologist or nurse if you experience these symptoms.

## What types of peripheral nerve blocks are there?

There are many types of nerve blocks. The type depends on where you had surgery. Your assessments, treatment and care also depend on the type of nerve block you have.

Members of your health care team will teach you about your nerve block and explain your care. You are monitored by the health care team closely for the type of nerve block you have.

Your nurses and other members of your health care team will check:

- the pump
- the site where the catheter goes into your skin
- the effects of the nerve block
- your pain control
- your overall skin condition
- your muscle strength

Nurses also check to see if the nerve block is working well by moving a small bag of ice on the skin in the area and asking you to describe what you feel.

While you have a nerve block, the medication may affect the strength and sensation or feeling of the operated limb. This goes away after the block is taken out.

## **Do I need to stay in bed when using this machine?**

You can move around with the machine if you are allowed out of bed.

You may need to use a walking aid if the medication is going into your hip or knee. Always check with your nurse before you get out of bed or stand up. The machine is attached to a pole with wheels. The pump can be switched to batteries so you can move around.

## **When do I start to use this machine?**

The machine is connected when you are awake after anesthesia. You can begin to give yourself pain control medication as soon as you are able to push the hand-held button.

## **When should I give myself pain control medication?**

You should give yourself pain control medication when you begin to feel pain. You can also have some medication before you:

- do deep breathing, coughing and moving exercises
- begin physiotherapy
- have a test or procedure that may cause pain