



Acute Pain Service  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## PRE-OP NERVE BLOCK INFORMATION SHEET

### *FAQs*

This information is for patients who have received regional anesthesia by the Acute Pain Service at JPS Health Network at the Main Campus in Fort Worth and/or the Surgical Center in Arlington. The purpose of the single shot regional block or catheter placement as explained was to provide you with pain relief during and/or after surgery. Below are frequently asked questions and answers related to your regional block.

#### **What is the Acute Pain Service?**

- ✚ The Acute Pain Service is a team of Anesthesiologists and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) dedicated to providing patients with optimal pain control for both inpatient and outpatient surgery utilizing regional anesthesia technique (nerve blocks).

#### **Why was this block performed?**

- ✚ To provide you with anesthesia for surgery or to provide you improved pain control after surgery. You may have received a single injection or possibly a catheter placement with infusing local anesthesia medication.
- ✚ To provide regional blocks when consulted by other department(s) in the hospital. For example, some patients who have suffered a trauma and sustained rib fractures may benefit from a thoracic epidural to help with pain in the first few days following the injury.

#### **What will it feel like to have this block? What do I need to do to be safe with my blocked extremity?**

- ✚ Ideally, you will have very minimal or no pain at all. This depends upon the surgery and the type of block performed. **You will notice your blocked extremity will feel very heavy and numb; this is normal** following block placement. Do not attempt to use your blocked extremity.
- ✚ **IMPORTANT:** Because you will not have normal function of your extremity, it is extremely important that you are careful not to accidentally injure yourself. Pain is actually one of the body's protection mechanisms and a regional nerve block prevents the pain mechanism from working until the block wears off.
- ✚ Make sure that you do not put pressure or heat on any extremity which feels numb from your regional block.

#### **But I have a pain catheter; I thought I was supposed to start physical therapy?**

- ✚ Yes. If you have a pain catheter for a total joint replacement or other surgery you may do physical therapy. Your physical therapist will assist you in your exercises. **You must NOT try to walk or get out of bed on your own.** You need to follow the activity guidelines and limitations set forth by your surgeon and physical therapist.

### What should I know about my pain catheter?

- ✚ For most types of orthopedic surgeries, the pain catheter may stay in for 3-4 days. You should inspect the catheter entry site for any signs of redness, swelling or discharge. If you notice any of these signs please contact the Acute Pain Service. It is common for the block medication to leak out of the skin entry site of the catheter. This is normal. The most common reason for failure to provide adequate pain control is dislocation of the nerve block catheter. To decrease the chances of this happening, avoid pulling or tension on the infusion line and catheter. **If the catheter comes out on its own, that is ok.**

### How long will the pain relief last? What can I expect as the block wears off?

- ✚ If you received a single injection of medicine the block may last from 4-24 hours. The time that a block will last varies between patients and types of medication used for the block. If you have a pain catheter in place, the block will last until the medicine is no longer infusing in the catheter and the infused medicine wears off.
- ✚ As the block wears off you may notice sensations in the area that was previously numb. Also, you may begin to regain motor function (movement) of that area that was blocked. Movement usually comes back first. Some patients may experience tingling as the effects of the medicine wear off. Eventually, you will experience aching and sometimes a burning sensation in the area operated on. Ultimately, full sensation and motor function will return.

### What should I do when the block is starting to wear off?

- ✚ **IMPORTANT:** It is recommended that you begin following the pain medication regimen set by your surgeon as the sensation starts to return, and before significant pain begins. We encourage all patients to take pain medication as ordered by this surgeon **around the clock** for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. **Taking scheduled pain medications while the block is in place will help significantly with pain control when the block wears off.**

### Will someone follow-up with me concerning the regional (nerve) block I received?

- ✚ Yes. A member of our Acute Pain Service will come see you if you are still in the hospital after surgery. Also, if you have been discharged home or received day surgery, you will get a phone call from our team. We will want to evaluate your current pain level as well as your pain over the last 24 hours. In addition, we will answer any new questions you may have related to your pain block. If the Acute Pain Service attempts to contact you and is unable to do so, **please feel free to contact us at the number listed at the top of this page.**
- ✚ Please **DO NOT contact the surgeon** or their office concerning your pain block or catheter. This is managed by the **Acute Pain Service ONLY.**

### It's been more than 24 hours and I still cannot feel any pain or I am still numb, should I be concerned?

- ✚ Sometimes a block can last upwards of 30 hours. If this is the case, continue to look for the signs discussed above. If the block seems to "persist" then please feel free to contact our pain team at \_\_\_\_\_ and we will be glad to discuss your concerns over the phone.