

Chest Wall Nerve Block for Breast Surgery

Your surgeon and anesthesiologist are recommending a nerve block as a part of the pain management plan for your surgery. A nerve block is an injection of numbing medicine (local anesthetic) that lessens feeling and pain at the site of surgery. This brochure explains the procedure and care needed after you leave the hospital. Carefully follow any instructions given to you by your healthcare providers.

Procedure

The nerve block will be given in the preoperative area before your surgery. Your anesthesiologist will use an ultrasound-guided technique to safely inject the numbing medicine around the nerves in your chest. This may cause you to lose some feeling in the area where you will have the surgery. This may last up to 24 hours.

Going home

Protect the surgical area

The nerve block can last up to 24 hours. During this time:

- **It is important to protect your chest wall and breast from injury.**
- Keep your surgical bandages on for the first 24 hours. If you were given a surgical bra and/or an elastic bandage (ACE™) wrap, please follow your surgeon's instructions.
- Protect your chest from hot and cold temperatures. Your sense of hot and cold may be lessened until the block wears off.

Stay comfortable

Begin to take your pain medicine as soon as you notice the block starting to wear off. The first sign may be tingling. Take your first dose at that time, which may be around dinnertime. If it is time for your next dose, take your pain medicine before you go to bed. Then, take the medicine on the schedule prescribed by your surgeon, as needed for pain.

Do not wait to feel severe pain. It is much better to prevent the build-up of pain than to try to stop it once it is there.

Contact your surgeon about any severe pain not controlled by your medicine.

Special instructions

- Have someone stay with you at home after your surgery.
- Carefully follow any instructions given to you by your healthcare providers.
- If you notice numbness or weakness in your arms, please contact the anesthesiologist.

Please feel free to page the anesthesiologist 24 hours a day at 312.695.7039 if you have any questions about your anesthesia care.