After your nerve block

Anaesthesia & Perioperative Medicine

Information for patients, families and friends

You have had a nerve block for pain relief after your operation, and the part of your body affected will not feel normal afterwards. You will feel numb and may not be able to move your limb normally while the nerve block is still working.

Looking after your numb arm or leg

Because the nerve block will stop you from feeling pain in the usual way, you could injure to your arm or leg without being aware that this is happening. For this reason, it is important to leave the dressings and bandages untouched - they will help protect your operation site.

Try to keep your arm or leg comfortable and elevated on a pillow. Do not apply any pressure on your arm or leg and take special care not to expose it to very hot or cold materials as they may cause burns.

While your arm is weak following a nerve block, you should wear a sling to take the weight of your arm.

If the nerve block affects your leg, you should not try to stand up without assistance and crutches. You should not drive until the feeling and strength in your arm or leg have returned to normal.

When the block wears off

When the nerve block starts to wear off, your arm or leg may feel warm or have pins and needles before beginning to feel sore from the operation.

It is important to take the pain killing medication provided as soon as you begin to feel discomfort as they take time to have an effect. Take pain relief at night before the nerve block wears off to reduce the chance that you wake up with discomfort.

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding your nerve block or if the feeling or strength in your arm or leg has not returned to normal after 36 hours, please contact the Department of Anaesthesia on 03 9076 3176 (attended Mon-Fri).*

*Outside of these hours, if you have any concerns which may be related to the surgery you have had, please contact the Surgical Unit via the main hospital number.*