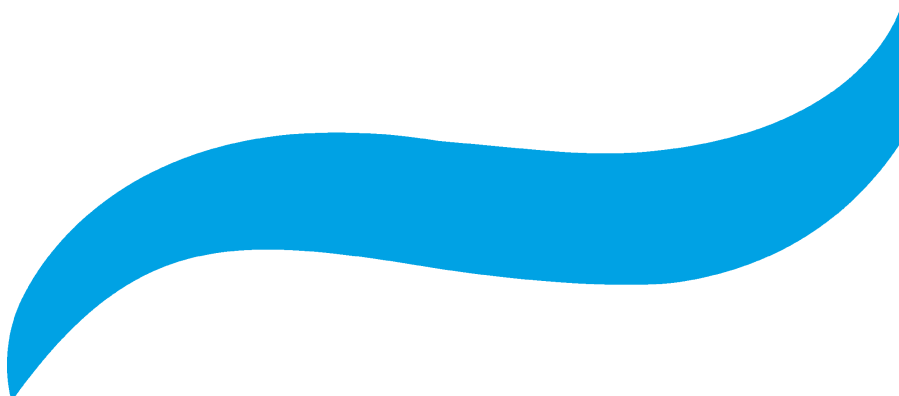




Nerve blocks for surgery on the shoulder, arm or hand

Information for patients
Anaesthetics



We aim to do your operation under a nerve block, with you awake rather than under general anaesthetic. This leaflet will tell you all about that procedure. If after watching the video, you would prefer not to undergo this procedure awake, you can speak to the anaesthetist on the day of surgery.

WHAT IS A NERVE BLOCK?

A nerve block is an injection of local anaesthetic around a nerve to stop you feeling pain.

For surgery to the arm or hand, we place a brachial plexus nerve block. This means we target the groups of nerves that lie between your neck and your armpit. These nerves supply movement and feeling to your whole arm. We inject either just above your collar bone or under your armpit.

We use an ultrasound machine to help us to see where to inject. Sometimes we will do other nerve blocks further down your arm.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Your whole arm will be numb, and you won't be able to move it for around 16-18 hours. We will give you a sling to protect your arm after the surgery. Unless we tell you otherwise, you can remove the sling once you have full feeling back in your arm. The feeling will gradually come back over a few hours.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF NERVE BLOCKS?

- ❖ Nerve blocks give excellent pain relief after surgery.
- ❖ You will need fewer strong painkillers. The strong painkillers can cause drowsiness, constipation and sickness.
- ❖ You will not need a general anaesthetic. This means you avoid all the risks of general anaesthetic.
- ❖ You will leave hospital sooner and be able to eat and drink more quickly.

WHAT IF I FEEL NERVOUS?

It can sound like a scary procedure. We find that most patients prefer the nerve block to a general anaesthetic. If you are feeling nervous or anxious, we can give you some sedation while we perform the block.

WHAT IF I AM STILL NOT SURE?

You will be seen by an Anaesthetist on the day of your surgery. You can ask them more about the different types of anaesthetic you could have.

We have prepared a video that you can watch that tells you more about awake surgery. You can access it via this link <http://vimeo.com/showcase/6986298> and using the password **NHS2020**. Choose the video 'NHS – Awake Upper Limb Surgery'.
You can also use this QR code if you have a smart phone.



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