

I have had a:

..... block

at (time) .....

on (date) .....

## WHO CAN I PHONE FOR ADVICE?

### Contacts

If you have any queries once you are home, or if you experience any difficulties in the 24 hours following your procedure, you should contact the Day Surgery Unit you attended.

You can contact the DSU's between 8:00am - 7.00pm.

- ❖ Haimyres - 01355 585630
- ❖ Monklands - 01236 712657
- ❖ Wishaw - 01698 366460

If you need advice or assistance outside these times you should contact:

- ❖ NHS 24 - Tel: 111
- ❖ Your GP

**NHS Lanarkshire** - for local services and the latest health news visit [www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)

NHS Lanarkshire General  
Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

**NHS inform** - The national health information service for Scotland.  
[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)  
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please e-mail: Translation.  
[Services@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Services@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)



[www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

Pub. date:	January 2023
Review date:	January 2025
Issue No:	07
Dept:	Day Surgery Unit
Clinical Lead:	Colum Slorach



# Nerve Blocks

Anaesthetic information for patients  
Day Surgery Unit



This leaflet explains what a Nerve Block is. It is not a new technique but is becoming more widespread because we now have ultrasound technology which allows us to 'look at' the nerves we wish to block.

## WHAT IS A NERVE BLOCK?

This is a technique used to temporarily numb nerves supplying a part of the body. It stops pain signals from reaching the brain. Nerve blocks can be done on many parts of the body and can be tailored to the area of the body being operated on.

## BENEFITS OF BLOCKS

Good pain relief is important for your recovery. Nerve blocks are the most effective form of pain relief we can offer you. They are successful around 8-9 times out of 10.

This may reduce your need for other strong pain relieving medicines like Morphine which have common side effects of nausea and drowsiness in some people.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

We may offer you a mild sedative before the nerve block to help you relax. Your Anaesthetist will inject some local anaesthetic around, but not into the nerve fibres that they wish to block. This numbs the area. The block usually takes 10-15 mins to perform.

## WHEN IS IT DONE?

Some nerve blocks are done before your operation, usually before you go to sleep if you are having a general anaesthetic. However, some may be done whilst you are asleep but your anaesthetist will make you aware that this will be the case before you have your general anaesthetic.

## HOW LONG DOES THE BLOCK LAST?

A nerve block can last up to 18 hours, and can last even longer in some people. This will depend on the nerves that have been blocked and the type of anaesthetic used.

## HOW WILL I FEEL AFTERWARDS?

Normally the nerve block wears off gradually. You may feel a tingling or "pins and needles" type sensation as this happens. This is normal. You will usually regain the strength in your limb before the full feeling returns.

**It is vital that you protect the limb and do not use it whilst it remains numb.**

## WHAT DO I DO WHEN IT WEARS OFF?

The nerve block may wear off whilst you are asleep the night after your operation, so **it is wise to take some oral painkillers before you go to bed that night.** These will be given to you to take home.

## ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS OR RISKS?

As with all anaesthetic techniques there is a possibility of side effects or complications.

Permanent nerve damage after a nerve block is rare. Current evidence suggests that it is in the order of 1 in 2000 - 1 in 5000. Short term injury (greater than 48 hours) occurs in less than 1 in 10. Of those that continue, 92-97% (depending on block) recover within 4-6 weeks and 99% within a year. Your Anaesthetist will talk to you about any more specific risks of the particular block you are having done.

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♦ <b>Very common</b>	<b>1 in 10</b> Someone in your family
♦ <b>Common</b>	<b>1 in 100</b> Someone in your street
♦ <b>Uncommon</b>	<b>1 in 1,000</b> Someone in a village
♦ <b>Rare</b>	<b>1 in 10,000</b> Someone in a small town
♦ <b>Very rare</b>	<b>1 in 100,000</b> Someone in a large town

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## HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE NERVE DAMAGE?

This is felt as a change in sensation such as an area of numbness or pins and needles, or rarely pain. It would be rare for the nerve damage to cause weakness.