

Peripheral Nerve Block Infusion

Care in the hospital and at home

What is a peripheral nerve block?

A peripheral nerve block is one way of giving pain relief right at the site of surgery or injury. A small catheter is placed under the skin into the space containing nerves that provide feeling (sensation) to the surgery area. Medicine is given through that catheter to block (or stop) the pain messages from being carried to the brain along the nerves.

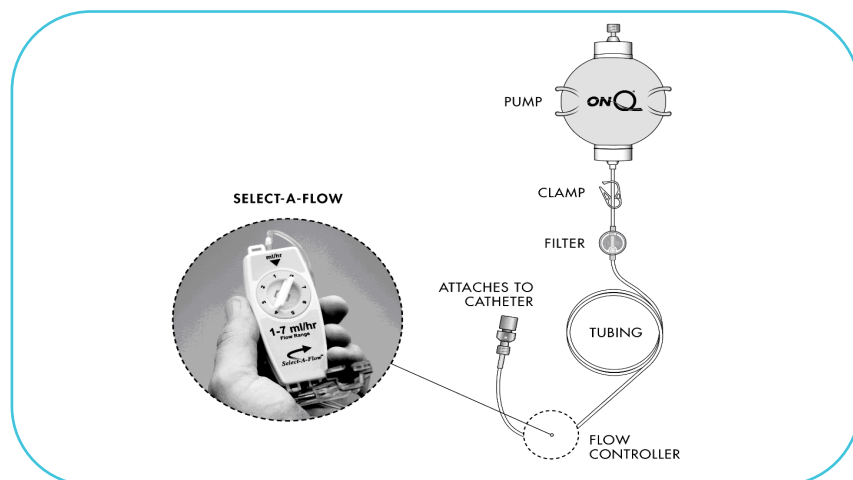
What pain medicine will my child receive?

Local anesthetics (numbing medicines) are given through the peripheral nerve catheter. Since these focus on one area, there are fewer side effects (nausea, constipation, drowsiness) compared to traditional narcotic pain medicines (morphine, Percocet). This helps your child begin moving comfortably and feeling good, so they can get better faster.

How does the infusion work?

Most peripheral nerve catheters have local anesthetics going into them continuously at a very slow rate. The catheter is connected to tubing and a bag of medicine inside a 'balloon' type pump.

The doctor has set the pump to deliver the amount of medicine needed for your child's pain. Older children may also have a button to push when they feel uncomfortable that will give them a pre-set amount of medicine.



On-Q Pump by I-Flow Corporation

How long will it last?

There are several sizes of balloon pumps. Each pump is designed to deliver a pre-set amount of medicine over 2 to 5 days. At the end of that time all the medicine will be delivered and the bag will be empty. Since the pump delivers the medicine very slowly over a few days, it may be hard to notice the balloon slowly getting smaller.

Care in the hospital and at home

- Keep the dressing clean and dry. No baths while catheter is in place.
- Check all connections of the catheter, tubing and pump to be sure they are tight and without kinks. If the system becomes disconnected, remove the catheter.
- Check that the white clamp is open (moves freely on the tubing).
- Protect the numb area from injury by changing position often, and being careful with heat and cold packs.
- Keep the pump in a bag outside your child's clothing and away from ice packs.
- Keep all labels on the pump and tubing to remind all caregivers of the medicine.
- **No MRIs** while catheter is in place.
- If the catheter is in your child's arm or shoulder area, use a sling to support the arm. If the catheter is in your child's leg, check for weakness before getting up and use crutches as taught by Physical Therapy.

When do I call the Pain Medicine doctor?

- Increase in pain
- Numb or tingling lips or mouth
- Metal taste in the mouth
- Ringing in the ears
- Sudden increase in anxiety
- Dizziness
- Sudden tiredness
- Difficulty breathing
- Redness, swelling, or leaking at the catheter site
- Any other concerns or questions

To Learn More

- Children's Operator
206-987-2000
Ask to speak to the Pain Service
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers
206-987-2280 (TTY)

How do I take the catheter out at home?

When the pump has delivered all the medicine the 'balloon' will be empty and flat, then can be safely taken out at home.

1. Tell your child that it is time to take off the tape and the catheter.
2. Gently remove tape over the catheter, holding the catheter in place with one finger where it goes into the skin. Do not use scissors.
3. Hold the catheter between your fingers close to the skin. With gentle steady pulling, slide the catheter out from underneath the skin.
4. **STOP** and call the Pain Medicine doctor on-call if the catheter seems stuck or your child has sharp shooting pain.
5. You may place a Band-Aid over the spot where the catheter came out.
6. Either place the catheter, tubing and pump in a plastic bag and bring to your next doctor appointment for recycling, or throw all parts away.

Questions?

All members of the team are here to help your child be comfortable. If your child has a peripheral nerve catheter, a member of the Pain Medicine Service will visit daily when they are in the hospital. After your child goes home we will call daily to make sure that the amount of pain medicine is just right to keep your child comfortable.

If you have questions, or would like to speak with a Pain Medicine Service team member, ask your child's nurse to page the provider on call.