

Peripheral Nerve Catheters

Watch our Peripheral Nerve Catheter video at seattlechildrens.org/catheter

Take out the catheter:

Day of week

Date

Time

What is a peripheral nerve catheter?

Peripheral nerve catheters have numbing medicine going into them continuously at a very slow rate. This is one way of giving pain relief close to the surgery site or injury. After your child is asleep, a small tube (catheter) is placed under the skin right next to the nerves that provide feeling (sensation) to the surgery area. Numbing medicine, local anesthetic, is given through that tube to reduce the pain messages from being carried to the brain along the nerves.

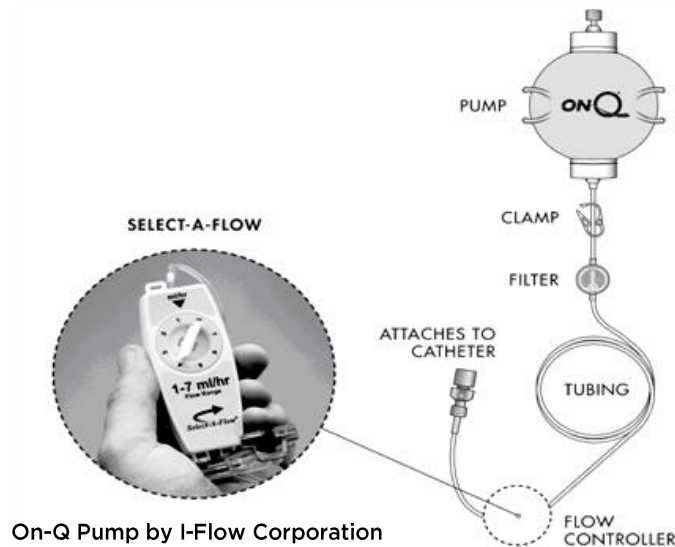
What medicine will my child receive?

Numbing medicines (local anesthetics) are given through the peripheral nerve catheter. Since these focus on one area, there are fewer side effects (nausea, constipation, drowsiness) compared to traditional opioid pain medicines (morphine, oxycodone). This helps children to begin moving more comfortably, so they can get better faster. Your child may also be prescribed pain medicines by mouth to help with pain.

How does the catheter work?

The catheter is connected to tubing and a bag of numbing medicine (local anesthetic) inside a 'balloon' type pump. The pump looks like a ball about the size of a large orange or a grapefruit.

The provider has set the pump, specific to your child's weight, to deliver the amount of medicine needed for your child's pain.



1 of 3

Important Numbers

- Anesthesia (Pain Service)
206-987-2000 - ask to page pain medicine on-call (not the pain clinic)
- Orthopedics
206-987-2000 - ask to page the on-call orthopedics resident

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your 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.

How long will it last?

There are several sizes of balloon pumps. Each pump is designed to deliver a pre-set amount of medicine for about 3 days. Since the pump delivers the medicine very slowly over a few days, it may be hard to notice the balloon slowly getting smaller.

Care at home

- Keep the dressing clean and dry. No baths while catheter is in place.
- Some leaking under the clear bandage tape is expected. Add another clear bandage tape to keep it in place as needed.
- 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 along the tubing).
- Protect the numb area from injury by changing position often, and, applying heat and cold packs for short periods only as recommended.
- Keep the pump in the bag provided outside your child's clothing, on top of blankets and away from hot or cold packs.
- Keep the pump away from pets and other children.
- Keep all labels on the pump and tubing to remind all caregivers of the medicine.
- **No MRIs** while catheter is in place. If an MRI is needed, remove the catheter first.
- 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 the Physical Therapy team.

When do I call the healthcare provider?

Anesthesia
(Pain Service)
206-987-2000 -
ask to page pain
medicine on-call
(not pain clinic)

Close the catheter clamp and call 911 if your child:

- Has difficulty breathing
- Is not responding normally

Close the catheter clamp and call the anesthesia provider if your child has:

- Numb or tingling lips or mouth
- Metal taste in the mouth
- Ringing in the ears
- Sudden increase in anxiety or uneasy feeling
- Dizziness
- Redness, swelling or leaking at the catheter site

Call the anesthesia provider:

- If your child has unrelieved or increased pain
- For any other concerns or questions

When do I take the catheter out?

Three days after surgery, the medicine pump will be close to empty and flat (except for a tube in the middle of the ball). At this time, it is safe to take out the catheter at home following the instructions on the next page. To watch our video about how to remove the catheter go to seattlechildrens.org/catheter.

How do I take the catheter out at home?

1. Clamp the tube to stop the flow of numbing medicine. Tell your child it is time to remove the tube.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Open and lay out all of the supplies that were provided to you.
4. Put on gloves and open the adhesive remover, gauze packet and Band-Aid.
5. Do not use scissors to remove the dressing. Use the adhesive remover to gently remove the tape over the catheter working toward the center.
6. After the edges have been loosened, hold the catheter in place with one finger where it goes into the skin. Continue to loosen the dressing.
7. When the dressing is completely loose, hold the catheter between your fingers close to the skin. With gentle steady pulling, slide the catheter out from underneath the skin. The catheter should slide out easily. If the catheter seems stuck, is too hard to pull, or your child has sharp shooting pain, stop pulling right away, place a clear dressing over the site and call the anesthesia provider.
8. Dab the site with gauze then place a Band-Aid over the spot where the catheter came out. Write down the date and time it was removed.
9. Place the tubing and pump in a plastic bag. Throw all parts away in your regular garbage.

Questions?

All members of the team are committed to help your child be comfortable. 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 and the pump is working safely.

If you have questions, or would like to speak with a healthcare provider, please have the operator page the provider on call.