



This document will give you information about a peripheral nerve block to your arm (upper limb). If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What is a peripheral nerve block?

A peripheral nerve block is a type of regional anaesthetic that involves injecting local anaesthetics and other painkiller near the major nerves to your arm. A nerve block works by temporarily numbing your nerves to give pain relief.

A nerve block for your arm can be used on its own while you are awake, with sedation, or with a general anaesthetic. A nerve block can be used instead of a general anaesthetic for the operation, and is also an effective form of pain relief afterwards. Depending on the operation, the injection may be given in the side of your neck, or near your collarbone or armpit, or in your elbow, forearm or wrist (see figure 1).

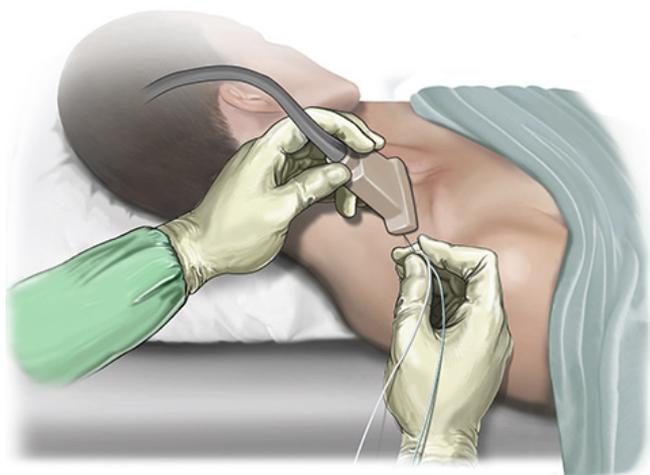


Figure 1

A peripheral nerve block

### What does the procedure involve?

Your anaesthetist will usually use an ultrasound scanner and nerve stimulator to help guide them where to inject the anaesthetic.

Your anaesthetist will insert the needle and when they are certain that it is in the right position they will inject anaesthetic through it. Sometimes your anaesthetist may insert a small tube through the needle before they remove it, leaving the tube in place so they can inject more anaesthetic.

### What complications can happen?

- Change in your breathing
- Failure of the nerve block
- Allergic reaction

- Bleeding
- Nerve damage
- Local anaesthetic toxicity
- Pneumothorax
- Droopy eyelid on the side of the block
- Developing a hoarse voice

### Summary

A peripheral upper limb nerve block can be used for most people, usually giving a safe and effective form of pain relief both during and after the operation.

### Acknowledgements

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