



Columbia Gorge SURGERY CENTER

INTERSCALENE NERVE BLOCK INFORMATION SHEET

(For Orthopedic patients)

- Interscalene block: Your surgeon may request this block for post-operative pain relief in surgical procedures involving the shoulder and upper arm.
- Benefits: Significant to total pain relief following extensive surgeries involving the shoulder and upper arm. Additional benefits include: decreased pain medication requirements, reduced incidence of nausea and vomiting, and potentially early discharge home.
- Normal course: A numb and often immobile shoulder and upper arm is expected for approximately 16 – 36 hours after the surgery. The duration of the numbness can vary and is dependent on the type of local anesthetic used, additives and individual variation.
 - Once the numbness starts to wear off, the discomfort from surgery will intensify progressively over the next 1-2 hours. Therefore we recommend starting oral narcotics (e.g. Norco or Percocet) and anti-inflammatory medications (e.g. Ibuprofen or Motrin) as soon as oral medications are tolerated. These medications should be taken on a scheduled basis, allowing for a smooth transition from the nerve block to oral medication based pain relief.
- Normal and Expected side effects: A droopy eyelid on the affected side and voice hoarseness can last as long as the local anesthetic effect. Local anesthetic effect varies, but is typically between 8 and 24 hours. Mild sensation of shortness of breath may be noted particularly in patients with respiratory disease
- Risks: Failed block, bleeding, infection, reaction to local anesthetic including seizure and cardiac arrest, spinal block, epidural block, collapsed lung, peripheral nerve injury or persistent tingling sensation are all potential risks. Please discuss any concerns regarding these risks with your anesthesiologist.
- Additional recommendations: Please keep the operative arm and elbow well protected and padded for the duration of numbness. This will prevent unrecognized pressure from being placed on the arm that could result in nerve injury
- Post Operative call: To ensure your safety, you will receive a nursing call 24 hours after surgery. If you have additional concerns, or if you feel that the medications are not wearing off, please inform the nurse or your anesthesiologist.

Please discuss all concerns regarding this procedure and your anesthetic care with your anesthesiologist. The above information is not intended as a substitute for a complete discussion with your anesthesiologist. It is intended for your education and to enhance your ability to ask informed questions. You may contact an anesthesiologist with Columbia Gorge Surgery Center at (509) 493-0539.