

GOING HOME WITH A NERVE CATHETER

You received the following nerve block(s): _____

The medicine will last until about: _____

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A NERVE BLOCK AND CATHETER

- Numbness
- "Pins and needles"
- Heaviness, weakness, or difficulty moving your arm or leg
- Feeling that your arm or leg has "fallen asleep"

CARING FOR YOUR NERVE CATHETER

- Avoid kinking or pinching the catheter and tubing.
- Keep the area dry so that the dressing does not come off.
- **There will be some leaking** of clear or pink fluid at the block site or around the bandage. You may re-enforce with First Aid tape; do not try to pull off or replace dressing.

CARING FOR A BLOCKED BODY PART

- Protect your numb limb!
- Be careful placing hot or cold items around the numb limb (including ice or heat packs).
- Carefully pad the limb to prevent bruising or other injury.
- Try to change positions often to keep from putting too much pressure on the arm or leg.
- Raise the arm or leg if possible to help lessen swelling.

FOR AN ARM/SHOULDER CATHETER

- Be sure your whole arm is supported by the sling; do not let the wrist dangle over the edge of the sling.
- Pad and cushion the elbow.
- Sometimes a block for the arm may cause mild shortness of breath, unequal pupils, a hoarse voice, or drooping of the eye. These are normal and will go away with time.

FOR A LEG CATHETER

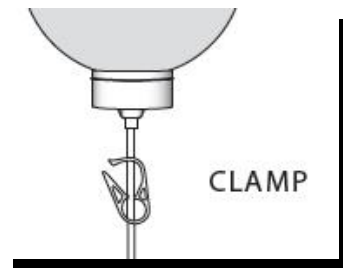
- Do not use the blocked leg to walk or support yourself; wait several hours after the block has worn off to put weight on it.

PAIN MEDICATION

- Nerve catheters may not take away *all* your pain. It is ok to take your pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon if needed.
- It is best to eat something before taking the pain medicine to help prevent feeling sick.

WHAT SHOULD I CALL ABOUT?

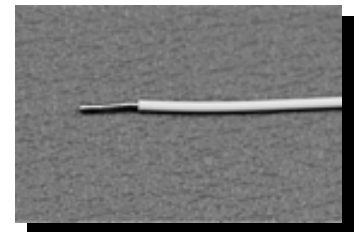
- Numb lips
- Metallic taste in the mouth
- Ringing in the ears
- Dizziness
- Sudden or increased sleepiness
- Increased anxiety or nervousness
- Tremors or shakes



If any of these occur, **clamp pump to stop infusion** (clamp shown above in open position). In case of seizure, call 911. For other concerns, please contact us at the numbers listed below.

REMOVING THE NERVE CATHETER

- This should be very easy and painless. The most uncomfortable part is removing the dressing
- The catheter should be removed when the pump is empty (upper picture to the right) and feeling has returned to the arm/leg
- Take off the dressing and tape covering the catheter (catheter may come out with this step)
- Gently grip the catheter where it exits the skin and pull. Do not use force.
- If it is painful or hard to remove, please call.
- Please check to make sure that tip is intact (lower picture to the right)



FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

During **weekdays from 7 a.m.-5 p.m.** please call the Outpatient Surgery Center at: **(434) 982-6100** and ask to speak with the regional anesthesia resident.

After hours, please call the University of Virginia Hospital Operator at: **(434) 924-0000**. Ask the operator to contact the anesthesia resident on call at pager **1250**.

We will call you every day until the catheter has been removed and normal feeling and strength returns. We will leave a message and call back number if we cannot reach you.