



Continuous Nerve Block

For pain control

This handout explains how a continuous nerve block catheter works and what you can expect when it is placed.



Scan this QR code with your phone for helpful videos.

What is continuous nerve block?

In your continuous nerve block procedure, a small plastic tube (catheter) will be placed to help with pain management. The catheter is placed close to the nerves that control feeling and movement in the painful limb. A small device pumps numbing medicine through the catheter to control your pain.

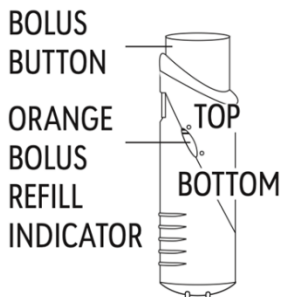


What should I expect?

- The nerve block catheter will not take away all your pain. But, you will not need to take as many pain pills while it is working.
- The device automatically pumps the medication at a slow flow rate for continuous pain relief. There is a button you can press to give yourself an extra dose of numbing medication if you feel you need it.
- The limb where the catheter is placed will be numb and may be weak. You may not be able to put all your weight on it.
- Over time, the pump will slowly lose its shape and flatten. This should take 2 to 3 days. When the pump is empty, you will see a hard core inside (see the image on page 2).
- A care team member will routinely contact you while your catheter is in place to make sure it is working safely.
- Do not change the flow rate dial unless your doctor tells you to.

How do I give myself an extra dose of numbing medication?

1. Press down on the bolus button until the button locks into place.
2. The medicine will be delivered. The bolus button will pop up after a few minutes. The bolus will then begin to fill.
3. The orange bolus refill indicator on the side shows you how much medicine is in the bolus.



The bolus button is used to give an extra dose of numbing medication, if needed.



The pump when it is empty.

Image used with permission from Halyard Health.

4. Another full dose of medicine is available when the orange bolus refill indicator is at the top level. This will take about 30 minutes
5. Pressing the button before the end of the refill time will give you only part of the medicine dose.

Self-care

- Always protect your limb that has the nerve block. Be careful with hot, cold, hard, or sharp surfaces. You can easily get hurt since your limb does not feel pain or pressure.
- Be careful when you move. Your balance may be affected.
- Do not pull on the catheter
- Always have someone help you when you stand or walk while you have this nerve block. Wait until the therapy is stopped and you have regained full feeling and strength in your limb before you try to stand or walk by yourself.
- If the catheter is in your leg, always use assistive devices such as a knee immobilizer, crutches, or a walker while walking or standing.
- Follow your doctor's instructions about positioning and activity.
- Keep both the bandage and catheter insertion site dry.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- Harborview Regional Anesthesia Service: Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 206.999.0992.
- After hours and on weekends and holidays, please call the ON-Q 24-hour product support hotline to speak to a registered nurse: 800.444.2728

When to Call

Call us right away if you have any of these serious symptoms:

- Numb lips
- Metallic taste in your mouth
- Ringing in your ears
- Severe dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting

Are there any side effects?

All procedures involve risks, side effects, and possible problems. The most common side effect is short-term pain at the catheter site.

Sometimes, a very small amount of the numbing medication leaks underneath the dressing, but this is nothing to worry about. Other risks include infection, bleeding, and ongoing weakness. It is rare to have serious side effects and problems from this procedure.

How do I remove the catheter when the pump is empty?

1. Sit down and take off the dressing over the catheter. Do not use scissors.
2. Firmly grasp the catheter near your skin. Slide it out from your skin with gentle, steady pulling. The catheter should come out easily. You should feel very little or no discomfort.
3. If you feel sudden sharp pain when you begin to pull, stop. Call us for instructions (see phone numbers in the "Questions" box).
4. After you remove the catheter, check the tip for a black mark. Call your provider if you do not see the black mark.
5. Place the catheter and pump in the trash.
6. You may place a small bandage over the spot where the catheter was.

To watch a catheter removal video, please visit www.myon-q/faqs.aspx.