

Anesthesia for Shoulder Surgery

Your wishes and those of your surgeon are important in choosing the type of anesthesia and pain relief you receive. Your medical condition will also affect the choice.

Shoulder Surgery Procedure

- You will have general anesthesia for your shoulder surgery.
- Nurses will check you into the pre-operative holding area. You will discuss your health and anesthesia plan with your anesthesia doctor.
- In the holding area, an IV will be placed in the non-operative arm.
- You will receive a nerve block before you go to the operating room (OR). After the nerve block, you will meet the OR nurses and the rest of your team. You will be taken to the OR after getting some sedation medication through your IV.
- Once in the OR, you will move onto a bed and have monitors placed
- We will confirm your name, birthday, surgery, and allergies.
- You will take deep breaths of oxygen. Next, you will get IV medicine that will make you sleep for your surgery. After falling asleep, a breathing tube will be placed. You will be moved onto your side.
- Your arm, neck, and legs will be well supported and cushioned
- Once surgery is complete, you will wake up and the breathing tube will be pulled. People often do not remember anything until the recovery room.
- Once in the recovery room, a nurse will manage any issues that arise.

Nerve Block Procedure

- You will meet the Block Team while you are in the holding area. They will talk to you about a nerve block for shoulder surgery.
- We do some form of nerve block for almost all of our patients having shoulder surgery.
- Most patients will have the option of having a single injection nerve block or a nerve catheter. Both blocks involve the placement of numbing medicine around the nerves in your neck. These nerves provide feeling to your shoulder and arm.
- For a single injection block, the needle will be removed after the medicine is injected. That medicine will numb your shoulder for 12 – 15 hours.
- For a nerve catheter, a very small tube will be left in place. It will constantly deliver numbing medicine for 48 – 72 hours.
- The nerve catheter will be attached to a small pump.
- Both of these nerve blocks provide better pain control than pain pills or IV pain medicine alone.

Comparison of Nerve Block to Nerve Catheter

	Single Injection Nerve Block	Nerve Catheter
Time it takes to place	5 – 10 minutes	10 – 20 minutes
Duration of pain control	12 – 15 hours	48 – 72 hours
Additional effort from the patient	None	Patient will remove the catheter.
Additional equipment	None	Will go home with a small pump that infuses numbing medicine. UPS will pick up this pump from your home.
How it is placed	Ultrasound and nerve stimulation	Ultrasound and nerve stimulation.

Studies have shown that nerve catheters for patients having shoulder surgery result in

- Less pain with rest and activity.
- Improved sleep.
- Less nausea.

Steps for the block

- Once a decision is made regarding what type of block you will have, we will bring you back to the block room. You will have heart, blood pressure, and oxygen monitors placed.
- We will confirm your name, date of birth, surgery, and allergies.
- After that, we will position you for your block. You will be sedated.
- While your block is placed, it is likely that your arm will “jump” at some point. This is normal.
- You may notice your arm start to become numb before you go to the OR.

Risks

- With general anesthesia the most likely bad outcomes are sore throat or nausea. We will give you some anti-nausea medicine during surgery to lessen that risk.
- The risk of any bad outcomes with this type of pain control is very low.
- All nerve blocks carry risk of nerve damage, bleeding, and infection.
- There may be a slightly higher risk of infection with a nerve catheter. The risk is still very low.
- You cannot have a catheter if you are on blood thinners.
- We will take many precautions to keep you as safe as we can.

We look forward to talking with you. We will speak with you more about your options at that time. **Patients' options will vary based on health conditions and physician preferences.**

Reference: <http://www.asahg.org/Knowledge-Base/Subspecialty-Interests/ASA/Continuous-Peripheral-Nerve-Blocks-for-Patients-at-Home.aspx>.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©4/2015. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7113.