

Going Home After a Lower Body Nerve Block

Checked below is the type of nerve block you had. Then the length of time the block lasts is noted next to it. The length of time the block lasts varies between patients.

- Lumbar Plexus (12 – 18 hours)
- Femoral (12 – 18 hours)
- Popliteal (12 – 36 hours)

Things to Know

- Protect your leg or foot from extreme heat or cold.
- **Do not** put any pressure on the leg or foot.
- Make sure you can always see your foot or leg.
- Use crutches, a cane, or a walker while your foot or leg is numb.
- If you have been sent home with a knee immobilizer, use this as directed by your surgical team or until your leg has fully regained strength.
- **Do not** put your full weight on your leg or foot. You may walk on your leg when your leg no longer feels numb.

Pain Medicine

If you have pain, you can start taking the oral pain medicine prescribed for you. **Do not** take extra Tylenol® (acetaminophen) if you are taking any of the medicines listed below.

- Vicodin®
- Norco®
- Percocet®
- Tylenol® #3

If you have not had any pain before going to bed, there is a chance that the numbness will wear off in the middle of the night.

For this reason, you may take your pain medicine before bed. We suggest that you set your alarm for 4 – 6 hours to see if you need to take more. The pain pills will take 20 to 30 minutes to start working. **Do not** wait until you are having a lot of pain. Waiting too long makes it harder to get the pain under control. Be careful if you have severe sleep apnea.

The Next 24 Hours

Follow these guidelines even if you have no pain:

- Avoid hazardous or strenuous activity.
- **Do not** drive a car, motorcycle, or bike.
- **Do not** run machinery or power tools.
- **Do not** drink alcohol or use drugs that have not been approved by your surgical team.
- **Do not** make any important personal or business decisions or sign important papers.
- Follow your doctor's advice about activity.
- Be careful when you sit or stand up after being in bed for a long time. You may become dizzy if you sit or stand too quickly.
- You should have someone, age 16 or older, stay with you for the rest of today and tonight. This is for your own safety.
- You may feel a little sleepy for the next 12 to 24 hours. This is partly due to the medicines you receive during and after surgery. Rest and relax for the next 12 hours.

Diet

- Start slowly with clear liquid such as water, apple juice, or soft drinks.
- If you feel okay, then try soup, soda crackers, and other foods that are easy to digest.
- Avoid spicy or fatty foods.
- Drink at least 6-8 glasses of clear liquids.
- Tomorrow, you can eat as you wish.

When to Call

- A fever above 100°F (by mouth) or 99°F (under the arm) for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Trouble breathing or a “wet sounding” cough that does not go away.
- Frequent vomiting after getting settled at home (more than twice).
- Trouble passing urine by late tonight or you have a painful, full bladder.
- Prolonged numbness lasting longer than you were told to expect.
- **In an emergency, call 911.**

Who to Call

Your surgeon is Dr. _____
from the _____ clinic.
The clinic phone number is _____.
Your anesthesiologist is Dr. _____.

The toll-free number is **1-800-323-8942**.

After hours, weekends, and holidays, please call **(608) 262-0486** (paging operator). Ask for the doctor on call for Dr. _____.
Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you have questions or concerns about the nerve block, call **(608) 263-6400** and ask for the Anesthesia Acute Pain Service Resident on-call.

A nurse will try to call you at home or work within the next few days. We will ask a few questions about your recovery and the care you received. Let us know if this may be a problem.