 **General Peripheral Nerve Block Instructions**

**What to expect:**

1. Your surgeon has requested that you receive a nerve block for your procedure to help manage your post-operative pain and facilitate your recovery.
2. A nerve block is performed in most cases before your surgery under sedation. Though still being able to communicate with us, most people do not remember the procedure afterward due to the sedation medication(s). Patients who have any recollection almost always indicate that they felt relaxed during the procedure.
3. A nerve block is performed under sterile conditions by one of our trained board- certified anesthesiologists utilizing ultrasound guidance and, at times, a nerve stimulator as well. These techniques help to confirm proper location of the injection and avoid injury. Ultrasound uses real-time 2-D images to visualize nerves. The stimulator causes brief muscle contractions or sensations as nerves are approached.
4. Local anesthetic is injected around the nerve to "turn off" pain sensation going to the brain. This results in temporary numbness as well as muscle weakness in the desired area.
5. A single injection nerve block usually lasts 12-24 hours.
6. Your surgery may still require a general anesthetic, which is, being "all the way asleep" for surgery.
7. Though patients may not need any pain medicine during surgery or for the rest of the day, a nerve block may not completely block all of the nerves in the area of your surgery, so other pain medicines may become necessary prior to the nerve block wearing off. You may take oral pain pills after your nerve block.
8. Patients typically wake up quicker, more fully and with little or no pain. Side effects and complications from typical pain medicines (for example, sedation, nausea, and constipation) are avoided or minimized.
9. Your anesthesiologist will explain the particular nerve block requested by your surgeon in greater detail and will cover any other questions or concerns you have regarding your anesthetic care.

**Risks:**

1. As with all types of anesthetic care, nerve blocks are generally very safe. These are preformed daily at our institution and many others around the country. Though minor symptoms or problems are possible, ongoing or serious problems from a nerve block are exceedingly rare.
2. General risks of nerve blocks include: infection, bleeding, injuring blood vessels and nerves, lung puncture, breaking difficulty, seizures, and risk of falling and not sensing new injury due to numbness.
3. A nerve block cannot be guaranteed and can fail to provide full pain relief or may even fail as a primary control. This may necessitate traditional oral or I.V. pain medicines or replacing the nerve block.
4. Some patients are at increased risk and may not be candidates for a nerve block, but this is uncommon. Your anesthesiologist will thoroughly consider your medical condition and evaluate whether or not you are a good candidate for a single injection.