

Benefits

Better pain relief which may also reduce any anxiety you feel. Less need for pain relief medicines containing opioids which can make you feel sick and may cause constipation. More rarely there is a risk of opioid addiction if you take them for a long time. Being able to get up and move around earlier and leaving hospital sooner. Reduced complications from lack of activity eg chest infection, blood clots, constipation.

Consent

Prior to having a nerve block, doctors will look at information from your medical and medication history. If you take any drugs to thin your blood, it is important that you disclose this information. Your anaesthetist will come to discuss the block, help you decide if this is a treatment you wish to have and take written consent.

Multimodal pain relief

Regular pain relief will also be prescribed for you. NB - please take the regular prescribed paracetamol.

If you feel your pain is increasing, it is too uncomfortable to take a deep breath or pain is stopping movement - **please inform your nurse and ask for a dose of your additional pain relief medication.**

Further information:

[Translations | The Royal College of Anaesthetists \(rcoa.ac.uk\)](https://www.rcoa.ac.uk) or scan the QR code:



Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Pain Relief using Local Anaesthetic for Rib Fractures

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق سهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

You have suffered a painful injury which has caused fractured ribs. A fracture is the same as a break.

You may have noticed that pain is limiting your movement and it is sore to take a breath. It is important to be able to take deep breaths and move about to prevent complications such as a chest infection.

You will be assessed to see if a nerve block catheter (thin tube) or a one off local anaesthetic injection will be of benefit to make you more comfortable.

What is a nerve block?

Nerve blocks are injections that numb certain parts of the body, in this instance your ribs. This makes it more comfortable to take deep breaths, do your breathing exercises and move.

The injection blocks the pain signals and may cause some temporary numbness over the affected area.

A nerve block will be given with regular oral pain relief to help manage the pain from your injuries.

What to expect/usual procedure

You may be taken to a room near the operating theatre or the anaesthetic room to have the nerve block.

Monitoring equipment will be connected so that the team can monitor your condition throughout the procedure.

The skin around the injection site on the upper part of your back will be cleaned and a small injection of local anaesthetic will be used to numb your skin – it does sting a little as it goes into the tissues.

After the skin is numb, a different needle is used to perform the nerve block. A small catheter (thin tube) may also be placed at the time of the injection for further local anaesthetic to be given as required over the next few days.

The anaesthetist will use an ultrasound machine to identify the site of injection and catheter placement. To enhance the safety and effectiveness of the block procedure.

You may feel some discomfort at the site during the injection or catheter insertion. Your chest may then start to feel warm and tingly before feeling less painful. The injection typically takes between 20 and 40 minutes to reach full effect.

If a catheter is placed, it will be secured with an adhesive dressing and will generally stay in place for 3 – 5 days, but can be longer in some cases. The tubing of the catheter is very thin and unlikely to cause any irritation.

Removal of the catheter is done by the nursing staff on the ward.

On the ward you will continue to receive regular pain relief tablets.

Risks

Nerve blocks are generally safe, however, as with most procedures in hospital, there are some risks to be aware of:

- Partial or no effect from the block – other pain relief options are available if this occurs.
- Bruising or bleeding at injection site.
- Infection at injection site.
- Damage to nearby blood vessels, nerves or lung lining (rare).
- Local anaesthetic allergy or toxicity (very rare).

Your anaesthetic doctor will discuss the risks with you.