

# Patient education

In addition to common patient education required for all regional blocks, tailor your instructions to the type of block administered.

## All regional blocks

### Serious side effects

- Chest pain
- Fast and/or irregular heartbeat
- Heavily labored breathing
- Ringing in the ears
- Extremity color changes
- Decreased peripheral pulses
- Blurred vision
- Seizures
- Chills
- Lightheadedness
- Dizziness and fainting

### Expected effects

- Decreased sensation
- Decreased movement to blocked area/extremity

### Avoid

- Operating equipment or machinery

### Instructions

- Follow discharge instructions and contact the surgeon's office with concerns or worsening of symptoms.
- Seek immediate medical attention for serious side effects and if numbness, tingling, or motor loss returns after a regional block has worn off.
- You can usually resume oral pain medications when sensation and movement start to return, but verify with your provider.

## Interscalene block

### Side effects

- Voice hoarseness
- Operative side—smaller pupil, eyelid drooping, inability to sweat, and shortness of breath due to decreased diaphragm movement

### Instructions

- Don't let the extremity dangle.
- Don't lift or hold objects with the affected extremity.
- Reinforce the upper extremity with slings or pillows.
- Avoid cooking, grilling, or touching anything hot to prevent accidental burns.
- If side effects worsen, inform the care team (inpatients) or the surgeon's office (outpatients).

## Femoral and adductor canal blocks

### Side effects

- Unable to bear weight on affected lower extremity, especially with femoral blocks

### Instructions

- Use prescribed orthopedic equipment, such as immobilizers, walkers, or crutches.
- Get assistance before ambulating.
- Keep a urinal or bedpan accessible.

## Transversus abdominis plane block

### Side effects

- Although rare, femoral nerve palsy can occur.

### Instructions

- The abdominal binder should fit snugly, but if femoral nerve palsy occurs, loosen it and contact the provider.
- Assess motor function before ambulating; assistance may be required.

## Patient education takeaways

Ensure patients know these important takeaways.

- ✓ Seek emergency services if you experience serious side effects.
- ✓ Use slings or pillows to provide support for the upper extremity.
- ✓ Avoid cooking or grilling. Because nerve blocks to the upper extremities reduce sensation, you may not be able to feel how hot a cooking surface is and injure yourself.
- ✓ Use prescribed lower extremity orthopedic equipment, such as walkers or crutches.
- ✓ Begin oral pain medications when sensation starts to return, as instructed or prescribed.
- ✓ Seek immediate medical attention if numbness, tingling, or motor loss returns after a regional block has worn off.