



Lower Extremity Nerve Block

After your anesthesiologist has reviewed your medical history with you, he or she may decide that you are a candidate for a Lower Extremity Nerve Block. This nerve block may be the only anesthesia that you require for your surgical procedure, but it is usually combined with a general anesthetic to provide intra-operative anesthesia and post-operative pain relief.

The lower extremity can be anesthetized by blocking one or both of the two main nerves (Femoral Nerve and Sciatic Nerve) that supply the lower extremity. The Femoral Nerve is relatively close to the surface of the body in the groin region and can be anesthetized utilizing a small needle and local anesthetic solution. The Sciatic Nerve is deep below the surface and can be anesthetized by either inserting a needle into the anterior thigh or buttocks. Your anesthesiologist may elect to do the injection after some intravenous sedation, but it is important that you are somewhat aware during the injection.

After the nerves are injected, the lower extremity will become numb and you will lose some or all of the movement of the lower extremity. This condition may last for several hours, depending on the type of local anesthesia that is used. You will NOT be able to stand or walk unassisted because of muscle weakness. You must use an assistive device until the block has worn off.

Possible Complications: Although rare, complications can occur with Femoral and Sciatic nerve blocks including:

- Bleeding or blood clot at the site of the needle insertion (rare)
- Infection at the site of needle insertion (rare)
- Nerve injury resulting in prolonged or permanent numbness, pain or weakness (<0.02%)
- Toxic reaction to the local anesthetic resulting in seizures or cardiac arrest (<0.02%)

Summary: Your anesthesiologist, who is a trained expert in this type of anesthesia, will evaluate you carefully, and will suggest this type of anesthesia only if he/she feels that it is beneficial, safe and effective, and that the benefits outweigh the possible risks. You have the right to question the anesthesiologist and his judgment and likewise, you have the right to not accept this type of anesthesia.