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Nerve Block Catheter

What is a nerve block catheter?

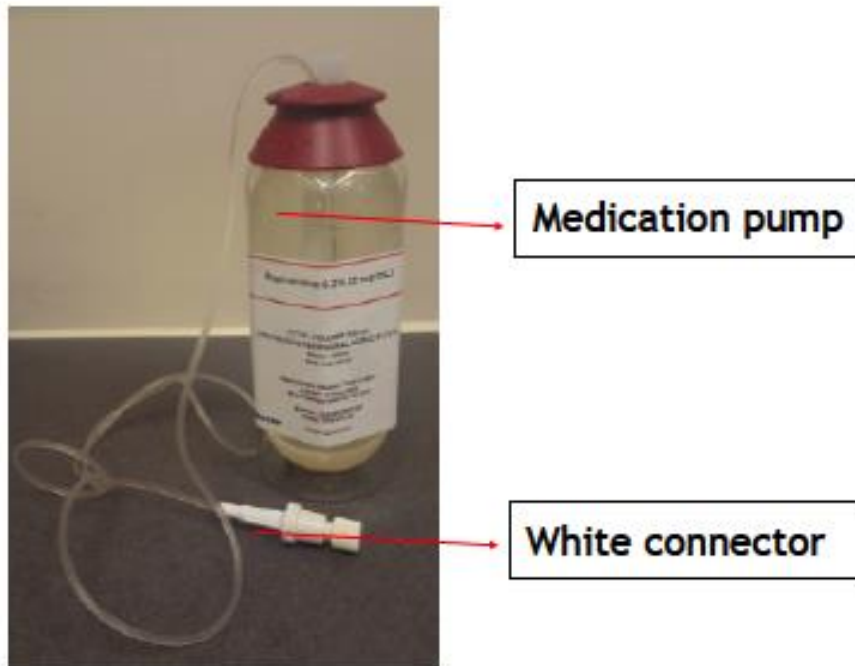
After knee replacement surgery, an adductor canal catheter may be placed to help with post-operative pain. Your anesthesiologist has discussed this with you before surgery and after surgery, they insert a small tube under your skin at the medial thigh. This tube or catheter allows the anesthesiologist to inject local anesthetic pain medication around nerves that supply sensation to the knee. This medication 'freezes' and 'numbs' the knee area so less pain is felt and less pain medications are required post-operatively. The tube is connected to a pump that allows for continuous delivery of pain medication. This pain pump should not cause muscle weakness, but always ensure your leg feels strong before attempting to get up and walk.

Patients will be sent home with the catheter still in place as the pump works for up to 60 hours after placement. At home, the amount of numbing medication is less than what you received in hospital, so it is expected that your knee and leg feel less numb at home. If you notice that you are feeling more pain, please use the oral pain medication prescribed to supplement your nerve block catheter to keep you comfortable.

How does the pain pump work?

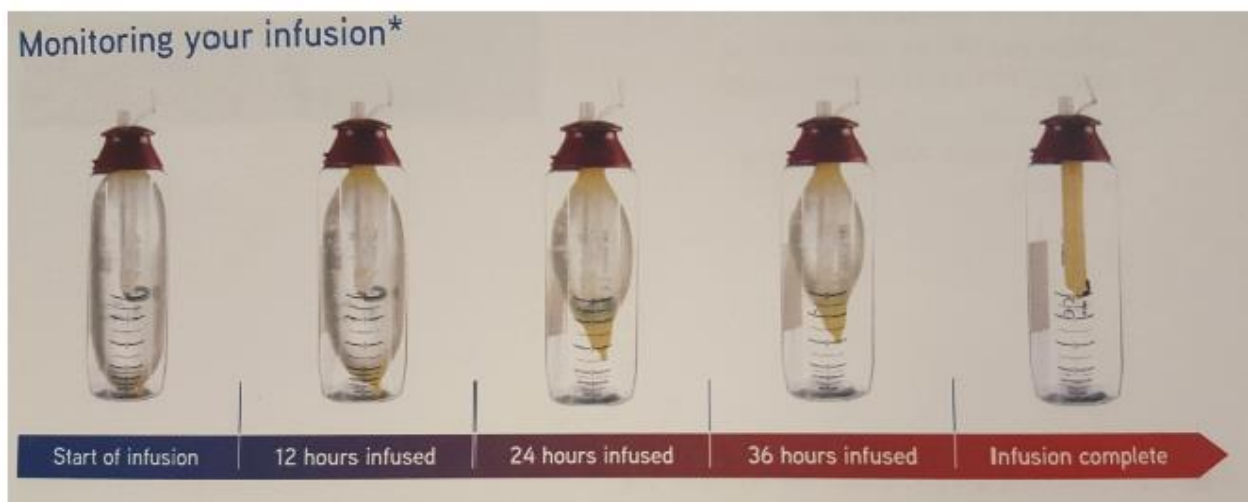
This nerve block catheter is connected to the pump which looks like a baby bottle (see photo). The numbing medication is found inside the balloon of the bottle and as the balloon deflates, it continuously delivers medication through the tube to the knee. The balloon usually takes upwards of 60 hours to deflate, which

means the pain pump can last upwards of 2-3 days.



How to take care of the nerve block catheter and pain pump

Over time, the balloon inside the bottle will get smaller/deflate. It may take upwards of 12 hours before you can notice a change in the size of the balloon. When the balloon is completely empty, it will look like a stick (see photo) and it is time to remove the catheter as the medication has run out.



- Throughout the day check the tubing to ensure it is not kinked.
- Ensure the white connector is still taped to your skin.
- Try to carry the bottle as close to the same level as the white connector to allow easy flow of medication from pump to connector.
- Keep the bottle away from direct sunlight, high/low temperatures and keep it at room temperature.
- If taking a shower, put the bottle on a chair or stool outside of the shower.
- When sleeping, place the bottle on the bed beside you in close proximity to the white connector. Do not put the bottle on the floor or hang it above your head. Do not put the bottle near an electric blanket.

How to remove the nerve block catheter

Removal of the catheter should be painless. When your balloon inside the bottle looks like a stick, it is time to remove the catheter. Your remote monitoring nurse may also instruct you when to remove the catheter.

Steps

1. Gather the equipment.
 - a) box of clean tissue
 - b) band-aid
 - c) plastic bag
2. Wash your hands.
3. Sit in a comfortable position.
4. Remove the tape and dressing from around the catheter insertion site.
5. Gently pull the catheter away from the skin. There should be 3-5cm of tube that is removed. If you feel a lot of resistance or shock into the leg when attempting to remove the catheter, stop pulling and notify the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app. Do NOT cut the catheter.
6. Once the catheter has been successfully removed, make sure you see a marked tip at the end of the tube. If there is no marked tip, notify the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app.
7. Some bleeding or clear fluid drainage from the insertion site may arise after removal. If this happens, place clean tissue over the site and apply direct pressure with your hand until the drainage stops.
8. Place a band-aid over the dry insertion site.

9. Place the catheter, tubing and bottle into a plastic bag and place in the garbage.
10. Wash your hands.
11. Expect pain to increase 1-4 hours after the removal of the catheter. Use your oral prescribed pain medication as directed.

What to do if...

Leaking – pooling of small amounts of clear or pink liquid under the dressing is common. NO action is required. If the dressing around the white connector peels off from excessive leakage, please contact the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app.

Bleeding – small amounts of reddish/bloody discharge is normal. If bleeding from the insertion site is heavy and very red in colour, hold pressure over the site for 5 minutes. IF it does not stop, notify the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app.

Blockage – If your balloon is not getting smaller even after 12-24 hours, the tubing may be kinked or blocked. Make sure the tube is not kinked along the entire tube and notify the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app.

Leg Weakness – weakness in the hip/leg/knee is not expected with the nerve block catheter and pain pump. Please contact the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app.

Severe pain – If you have uncontrolled pain with the pump and the use of oral medications as prescribed, notify the remote monitoring nurse through the Vivify Health app.

Other reasons to notify the remote monitoring nurse

- Tingling around your mouth or tongue
 - Metallic taste in your mouth
 - Ringing in your ears
 - Involuntary muscle twitching
- If any of the above symptoms occur between 7pm – 8am, please remove the nerve block catheter (see steps above) and seek medical attention immediately (i.e. call 911 or go directly to the nearest emergency department).