

Regional Anesthesia

The Anesthesiologist will discuss your options for different ways to manage the anesthesia you receive for the surgery. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and review any concerns you may have.

What is Regional Anesthesia (Nerve Block)?

Regional anesthesia is also called a nerve block. Regional anesthesia is the administration of medication to “numb” and reduce pain in the specific region where you will have surgery. Regional anesthesia medications are given by a needle through the skin to inject local anesthetics (freezing or numbing medication) next to specific nerves.

The Anesthesiologist will mark the side and site of the nerve block and may inject local anesthesia to numb the nerve block injection site. You will be awake for this procedure. You may receive sedation before the regional block to help you relax. The nerve blocks procedure typically takes 20 minutes. The numbing can last up to 8 hours after surgery.

Types of Nerve Blocks:

The nerve blocks used in breast surgery are:

Pectoralis Nerve Block

The pectoralis nerve block is local anesthetic placed underneath the pectoralis (chest) muscle to block the lateral and medial pectoral nerves (nerves that supply the chest muscles). This block is used to reduce pain associated with the pectoralis muscle. A needle is placed just under collar-bone beside your shoulder to numb the skin and muscles.



Pectoralis Nerve Block

Thoracic Paravertebral Nerve Block

The thoracic paravertebral nerve block is local anesthetic placed near the spinal nerves to block the nerves supplying sensation to the chest. This block is used to numb and reduce the pain to areas of the chest (side and front) and the underarm. The needle is placed in your back by your shoulder blades.



Thoracic Paravertebral Nerve Block

What Are the Benefits of the Nerve Block?

Having a nerve block improves comfort after surgery by reducing:

- Pain after surgery.
- Nausea and vomiting after surgery.
- The risk of chronic (long-term) pain after surgery.
- The need for opioids (narcotics) to control pain.

There are risks associated with all types of anaesthesia. Your Anesthesiologist will discuss this with you.

Patients Having Breast Reconstruction Surgery

If you are having breast reconstruction surgery, you will have general anesthesia. You may be asked to have regional anesthesia in addition to the general anesthesia.