



# Spinal Block

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## What is a Spinal Block?

A spinal block is a type of nerve block that is used to control pain during surgery. It is one method of pain control offered to children. At the beginning of the surgery, after your child has been put to sleep, the clinician will inject anesthetic medicine into the lower back. Your child will not feel or be aware of the injection. The anesthetic medicine decreases the feeling of pain from the nerves in the area of the operation, providing up to 24 hours of pain relief. You will be able to talk to your surgeon and anesthesiologist before surgery to decide if this option is best for your child.

**An anesthesiologist** is a medical doctor who specializes in giving drugs to control pain before, during, and after surgery. **An anesthetic** is a medication to control pain during a medical procedure or surgery.

## Should I choose this for my child?

Spinal blocks have several benefits:

- They provide better pain relief than using only IV narcotics for pain control.
- Wake-up time is shortened because the amount of anesthetic gases used during the surgery is reduced.
- Your child will need less IV narcotic medicine during surgery and for the first 24 hours after surgery.

## What will my child feel afterwards?

A spinal block will allow your child to feel comfortable when she wakes up from surgery. During this time your child may:

- Feel heavy, tingly or weak in the legs.

- Begin to feel more discomfort as the anesthetic medication wears off.

### How will I care for my child after the surgery?

1. A pain nurse will observe and monitor your child closely for 24 hours.
2. Your child may sit, walk or crawl with supervision.
3. Start oral pain medications as instructed.
4. The Pediatric Pain Service and your surgeon will be available if you have any questions after the surgery.

### What are the side effects of spinal blocks?

Below is a table of possible side effects and how often they may occur:

Side Effect	How Common
Nausea, vomiting and/or itching	Common (3 in 10)
Serious reaction to anesthetic medicine	Rare (2 in 1,500)
Headache	Rare (3 in 1,750 )
Nerve Injury, including paralysis	Extremely rare (4 in 10,000)

The Pediatric Anesthesia Team is committed to improving your child’s surgical experience. The anesthesiologist will answer all your questions about epidural blocks before surgery. Our goal is to decrease fear and anxiety, and provide sensitive and understanding pain-control care. We are devoted to educating all staff caring for your child.

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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