

Intercostal Nerve Block for Post-operative Pain Relief:

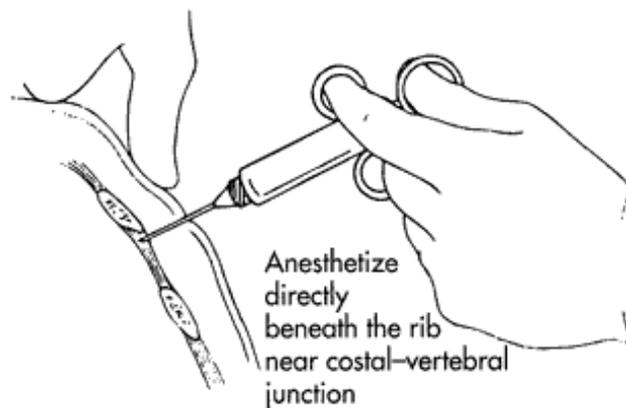
What should you know?

Introduction

This leaflet aims to provide you the basic information about the intercostal nerve block that you are going to receive. If you have any questions about your anaesthesia that are not covered in this leaflet, please discuss with your anaesthetist who will be willing to answer your questions.

What is intercostal nerve block?

Intercostal nerve block means blockade of nerves that are beneath the underside of your ribs. Injection of local anaesthetic around these nerves can provide pain relief for conditions such as thoracic operation, rib fractures, and chest wall injuries.



Are there any conditions that make me not suitable for intercostal nerve block?

Your anaesthetist will determine whether you are suitable for intercostal nerve block after assessing your medical conditions and the nature of your operation. Some conditions may make you unsuitable for the block:

- If you refuse

- If you have bleeding disorder: ease of bruising/prolonged bleeding
- If you receive anticoagulant or anti-platelet treatment: medications to 'thin' your blood or prevent clotting
- If you have infection around the proposed injection site at the chest wall

General information about the intercostal nerve block

- Your nerve block will be performed by your anaesthetist. He/she will do a pre-anaesthetic assessment before the procedure, including brief history taking, medical examination and review your investigation results. He/she will also discuss with you on the risks and benefits of your procedure and sign the consent form with you.
- Fasting: if you are going to have a thoracic surgery, you should fast at least 6 hours before your operation. You can safely drink water until 2 hours before the operation.
- You are allowed to take your usual medications (as instructed by your anaesthetist) with sips of water while you are fasting.
- If you feel unwell on the day of your operation, you should inform the hospital and your operation may need to be postponed.

How is intercostal nerve block performed?

- Vital sign monitors will be attached to you before the nerve block.
- Your anaesthetist will insert an angio-catheter into your vein and attach it to a running drip.
- Your nerve block may be done awake, after sedation or general anaesthesia.
- You may lie on your side or sit up while your anaesthetist performs the nerve block.
- The nerve block will be done under sterile technique.
- Your anaesthetist will stay with you at all times during the procedure, monitor your vital signs, give you treatment as necessary and ensure your safety.

Post-operative pain relief

The duration of pain relief offered by the block depends on the choices of local

anaesthetics used. Your anaesthetist will discuss with you on different choices.

Is there any risk of intercostal nerve block?

In general, intercostal nerve block is safe. The side effects and complications associated with this procedure can be divided into those that are very common and common, rare or very rare*.

Very common and common side effects	Rare or very rare complications
Infection	Pneumothorax
Bleeding	Haemothorax
Failure of pain relief	Cardiac arrest
	Nerve damage
	Local anaesthetic toxicity
	Local anaesthetic allergy

Remarks

This is general information only and the list of complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information please contact your anaesthetist.

Complications may sometimes occur despite all precautions. However, if they do occur, your anaesthetist will take appropriate steps to manage them.

*Reference of occurrence rate

Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very rare
1 in 10	1 in 100	1 in 1000	1 in 10,000	1 in 100,000